THE

UNIVERSAL DIRECTORY,

FOR

TAKING ALIVE AND DESTROYING

RATS,

AND ALL OTHER KINDS OF

FOUR-FOOTED AND WINGED VERMIN,

IN A METHOD HITHERTO UNATTEMPTED,

CALCULATED FOR THE USE OF THE GENTLEMAN, THE FARMER, AND THE WARRENER:

BY ROBERT SMITH,

LATE RAT-CATCHER TO THE PRINCESS AMELIA.

ILLUSTRATED WITH CUTS.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

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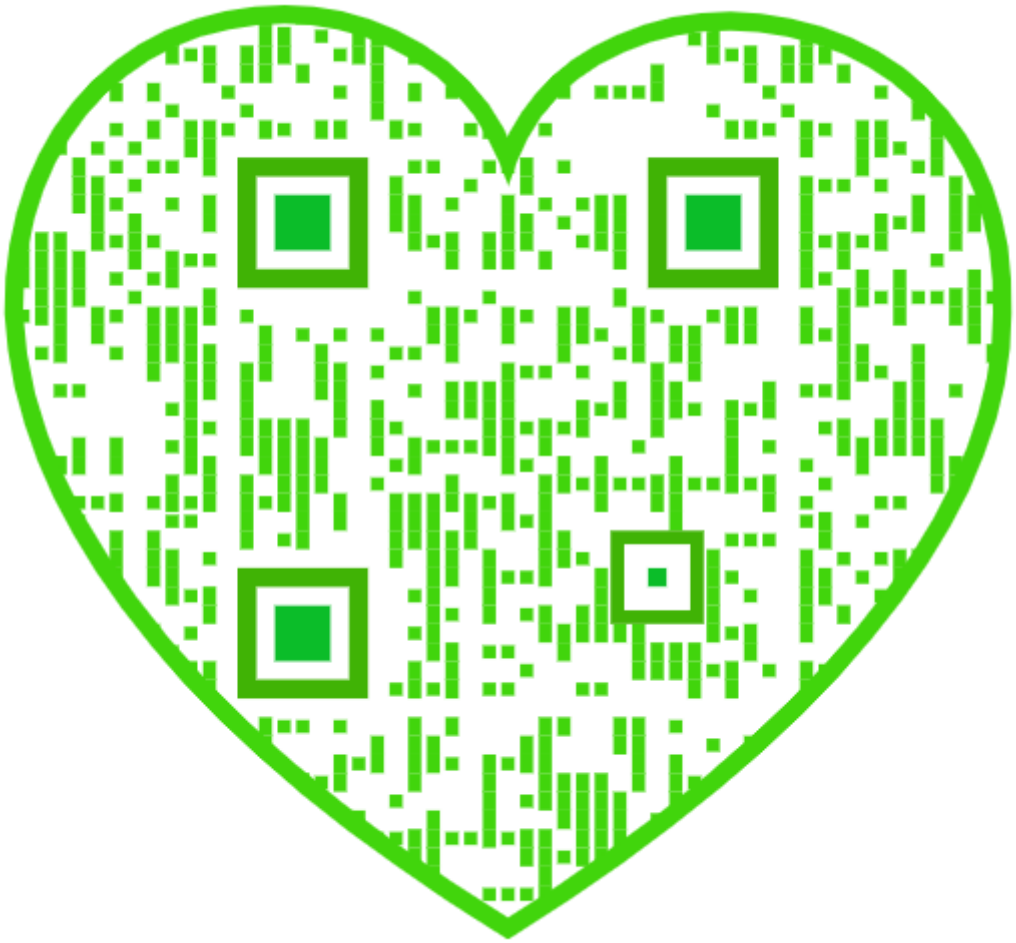

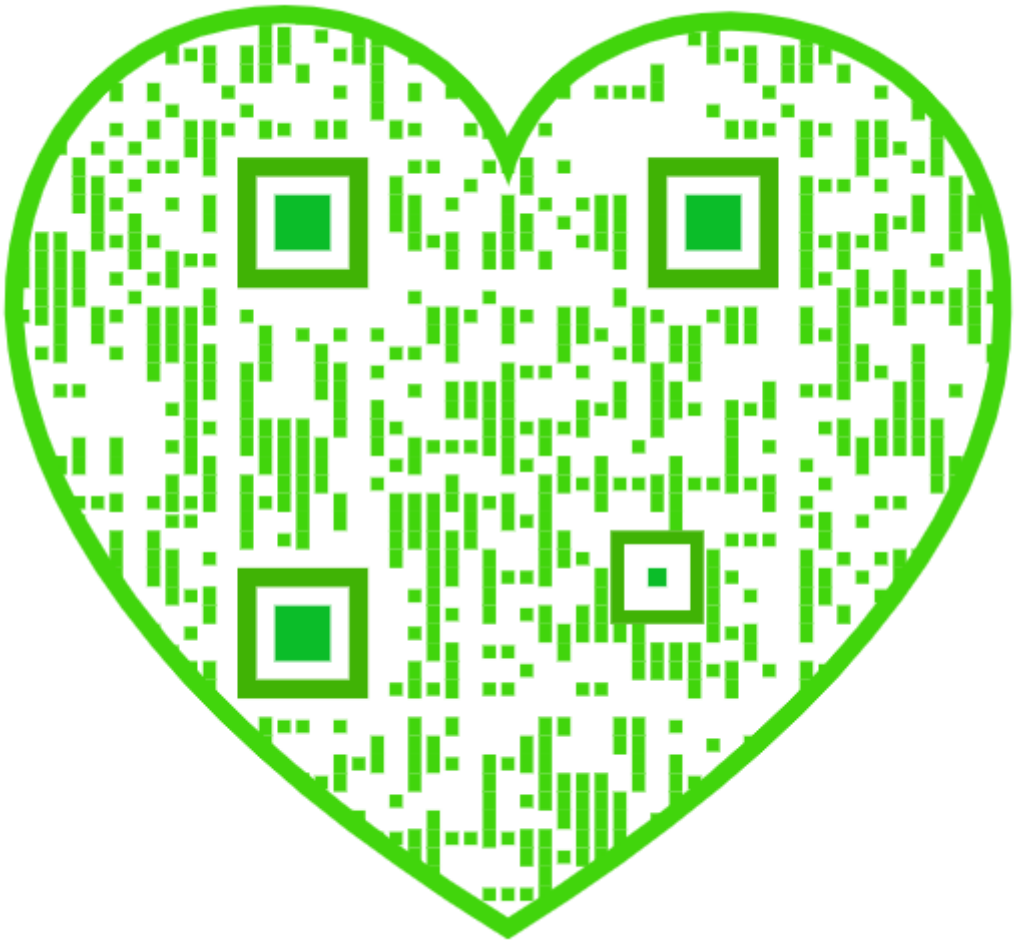

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INTRODUCTION.

However trifling and contemptible the following Treatise may appear to some persons, the author flatters himself that it will be productive of great public utility, although the subject is but low and humble.

Many ingenious writers have greatly distinguished themselves in treating of that noble and useful animal the horse; of the method of breeding horned cattle, sheep, and other animals, serviceable and beneficial to mankind; this little work, on the contrary, takes cognizance of those animals, noxious to the community, describes their wonderful wiliness and sagacity, and the uncommon and surprising methods they take for self-preservation and getting their prey; the research may, perhaps, give the reader great

satisfaction, for the infinite wisdom of the great Creator is as conspicuous in a mole as in a camel, in an ant as in a lion.

And as most noblemen, gentlemen, and others, who have country seats are generally, if not constantly, troubled with various kinds of vermin, greatly detrimental and destructive to their property in the following instances, viz. in many places where gentlemen have hare-warrens and pheasantries, they are troubled with foxes; their waters with otters, those great destroyers of fish; their poultry are killed by polecats, stoats, and weasels; in other places they are pestered with wild cats, who originally strayed from the farm and other lone houses, and running into the woods, breed in great numbers and do incredible mischief, in destroying the game, poultry, rabbits, and young leverets; in many other places they are troubled with sheep-killing dogs, who in the night-time worry and kill great numbers of sheep, so useful and necessary to the commonwealth, and the staple commodity of the kingdom.

But of all the noxious animals none do more mischief than rats; both the old English rat and the Norway rat, especially the latter, which is the most mischievous animal in the creation. In all the above cases, rules, not drawn from theory, but from twenty years' strict observation and practice, are laid down in the plainest manner, to find out their haunts and hiding-places; with the easiest methods how to take and destroy them, to the great joy and emolument of the persons who have been injured and pestered with them. Rules for taking and destroying moles and mice are likewise given, and the nature of ferrets is also described, with instructions when it is proper to make use of them, and when not.

And as the noxious part of the creation is not confined to the earth only, many of the winged inhabitants of the air are equally pernicious to the gentleman and the farmer, their natures are described, with proper and suitable directions how to take and destroy them, from the buzzard and the kite, to the

smallest bird of prey, without which the author would have estimated his work as incomplete.

On the whole, if the following little Treatise should any ways answer the intent for which it was written, the author will obtain the end he aimed at, and gratify the utmost extent of his ambition and wishes, namely, the good and advantage of his fellow-subjects, and the general good of the community.

THE FOX.

I SHALL first begin with old Reynard the Fox, for he is the king of the vermin in this island; wolves indeed formerly abounded here, an animal infinitely more fierce and dangerous than the former, but these for many ages have been entirely extirpated.

The Fox is a very subtle, sly, and daring animal, and in hard and severe winters will come to places where hares and pheasants are kept, and destroy a great many of them; he is likewise a mortal enemy to lambs and all kinds of poultry, but scarce in any other instances he is more mischievous than in destroying rabbits in warrens, which he frequently does in prodigious numbers, but more especially in stopping-time, as I have known the young rabbits of near twenty

stops taken away by the Foxes in one night's time. It may be necessary here to explain what is meant by the above term: When the female rabbit is ready to kindle, she digs a hole, or angle, about four feet long, and about ten or twelve inches under ground, and when she goes out for food, she scratches the earth over the mouth of the hole, or stop, so that it is scarcely perceptible to the eye, in order for the preservation of her young ones from any approaching enemy; in the night, the Fox being in search of his prey, comes to the place where these stops are made and scents the young rabbits, but instead of entering therein, he follows the scent above ground till he comes to the end of the angle, and then scratching up the earth comes immediately upon the young, which he devours; and this is called *crowning* on them.

It is very difficult to guard against the approaches of this enemy, his motions being so uncertain, unless a trap was constantly placed; for sometimes he will destroy seve-

ral lambs and poultry in the night at farm-houses, and not come near the same place again for a considerable time, shifting his quarters to other places considerably remote in search of fresh plunder; but in large parks where hares and pheasants are constantly kept in great numbers, there is a greater probability of taking him in the following manner.

The method to know where and which way he comes, is to make what is termed a shrape, which is done by drawing a circle* on the ground, in the park or warren, about three feet diameter, take the mould out all over, four inches deep, then take a sieve and sift a sufficient quantity of fine mould to fill it up again even to the surface; dig six of these in various parts of the park, and fill them up in the same manner. The reason of having the mould sifted so fine is, that when you set a trap there will be no stones to intervene between the spring and the jaw

* See letter A. plate 1. fig. 1.

of the trap, which will sometimes happen without proper observance, and prevent the trap from striking close.

The next step to be taken is to procure a sheep's paunch; tie a string to it, and draw it to each shrape, before described, but remember at the distance of two or three hundred yards to rub the bottom of your shoes on the paunch, which will prevent him from discovering the smell of your feet, and at every shrape lay some pieces of strong old Cheshire cheese, and come again in the morning, when you will plainly perceive whether his behaviour is shy or not; for he will sometimes eat all the cheese he can reach, without entering on the shrape; the next night he will venture somewhat further, and set his feet so lightly on the mould that you can scarcely discern their print: I have sometimes fed a shy Fox for a whole week before I have set a trap for him, but when he comes to feed boldly he will trample all over the shrape and make prints an inch deep; and in that shrape, where he seems to

feed the freest, I would advise to place two traps, and, without any particular accident, if he comes, you will be sure of catching him.

Set your traps after the following manner: Take some mould out, just sufficient for the traps to lie in; and when properly placed, get some moss, and with a small stick, put some of it under the bridge, and likewise between the bridge and the jaw, and lay it quite smooth; now the reason of having the above stick is, that in case you should spring the trap, it will not injure you in the least, but only catches the end of the stick. The next particular you must observe is, to procure a thin piece of board, a foot in length, two inches wide at one end, and cut away at the other to hold them by; then with this board strike some mould or earth over the trap, entirely level with the other parts of the shrape; this board is absolutely necessary in order to prevent your handling the mould, for if he is in the least shy, he will not approach the shrape if you

once handle it; another caution is likewise necessary, which is, not to let the bridges of your traps be too wide, for a Fox had better come and put his foot in between the bridge and the jaw of the trap, and not spring it at all, for in that case he will come again, as he has not been baulked, but when the bridge is too wide, if he happens to set his foot on the jaw, then his toe-nails reach the bridge, and spring the trap without catching him, which will render him shy, and it will be a very difficult matter afterwards to get him at all.

But in order to prevent any such disappointment, I would advise that your steel traps for the Fox should be square in the jaw, and not round as the common traps are usually made, and strike but five inches high, and seven inches long in the jaw, with saw-teeth*, and let the tail† of the trap be two feet from the tail end‡ of the spring,

* See the letters CC in plate 1. fig. 1.

† See D in the same plate.

‡ See E in the same plate.

Fig. 2.

The STEEL TRAP
set in a CUBE for a
FOX.

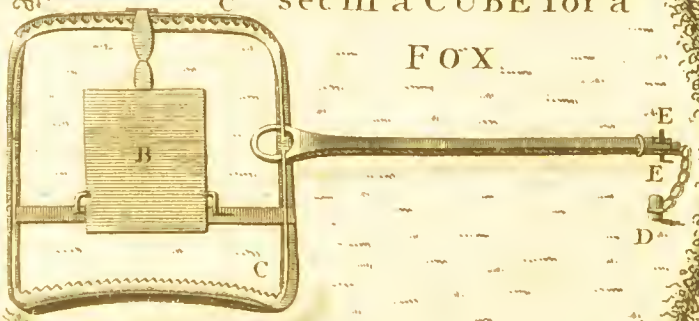
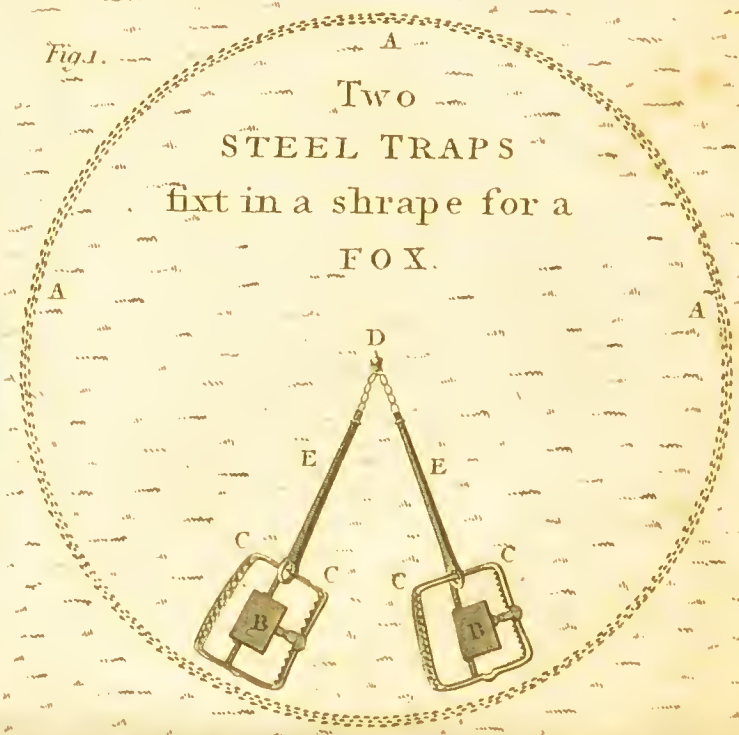


Fig. 1.

Two
STEEL TRAPS
fixt in a shrape for a
FOX.



for they are generally made too short, from whence this inconvenience arises, that when a trap stands for some time, in warrens or parks, the spring gives out, the purchase being so quick, whereas, were the traps formed on the principle above laid down, the spring would remain for a considerable time without giving way; and lastly, let the* bridge of the trap be four inches square.

But as to a shy Fox, as just above observed, I have known them come again, when compelled by hunger and necessity, and sometimes even with three legs, and take the young rabbits out of the stops or holes, as before described.

And here I beg leave to correct a vulgar error mentioned by some authors, which is, that the Fox, when caught by the leg in a trap, in order to facilitate his escape, will gnaw off the same above the jaws of the trap; but this assertion is entirely false and

* See B in the same plate.

erroneous, as it would put the animal to inconceivable pain and agony to bite its own flesh, while any sensation remained, and renders the supposition likewise unnatural; but the real state of the case is this, which I have proved from long experience: for as a dog, when he has got into a trap, will yelp and cry out till he is tired, which soon happens, and then lie quiet; on the contrary, this artful cunning creature we are now describing, as soon as taken, makes no noise at all, but is indefatigable in his endeavours to get out, and will neither stand nor lie still till either somebody comes to let him out, or he gets out by the following manner. He immediately begins to tumble and toss about, and after some time striving, he breaks his leg, just at the place where the iron jaws of the trap are fastened; the lower part of the leg, under the trap, is soon benumbed and deprived of all sensation, which the Fox then gnaws off, and drawing the sinews through the teeth of the trap, makes his escape, leaving that part of his leg which he had bit off behind him; and, as a farther con-

firmation, I once catched a dog and bitch Fox, early in the winter, who both escaped, by the above means, with three legs each, and the ensuing spring came to the same warren and took out several stops on their three legs, which I discovered, and poisoned them by means of some balls properly prepared, the method of which I shall soon come to describe.

It may not here be unnecessary to lay down some rules to distinguish the dog Fox from the bitch, which may easily be done, without seeing them, by adhering to the following observations: A dog Fox has a larger foot than a bitch, and it much resembles that of a small lurcher dog, and has been often mistaken for one, by those who do not examine things minutely: but there is an essential difference; for the Fox has hardly any ball to the heel of his foot, but the dog has a large one; and a bitch Fox has likewise a small foot with the ball thereof still considerably less than the male. The utility of this remark will soon appear.

I now proceed to lay down another method of taking and destroying these pernicious vermin, either in park, warren, or field, but more especially those who have been made shy, or have lost a leg in a trap, as before hinted, which is as follows: Whatever place it may happen to be in, you must take notice of all the little by-paths all round the ground, and sift some mould in each of them, and place by the side of each path, where the mould is sifted, a piece of white rag stuck upon a stick; for if there be any rabbits or hares near the path, they, by running up and down, will create such confusion in the mould, that it will be next to an impossibility to distinguish the impression of the Fox's foot; the intent, therefore, of these white rags is, to fright the rabbits and hares away, but the Fox will boldly proceed along regardless of them: as soon therefore as you have discovered which path he came along, you must not trail for him as before, for that having seduced him into danger, and led him to the trap, he will remember it well, and it is a very great chance whether

he will follow the trail at all. But take two good figs of nux vomica; let them be quite white and sound, (for those that are of a brown colour are neither so strong nor efficacious;) then rasp them very fine, take a piece of good dripping as big as a tennis ball, mix with these a little flour to bring it to a proper consistency or stiffness, and then roll it in honey; for there is nothing fonder of honey than a Fox, and I have seen one scratch up the earth for a bees' nest under the ground, for the sake of the honey, and after he had accomplished this design, having the wind of him, I shot him dead on the spot. But to return.

When you have found out the path he comes in, place two or three of these balls of the magnitude before mentioned, at nine or ten yards' distance, for fear he should miss one; place them on a small stick six inches high, in order to prevent the mice from eating them. But a little distinction is here necessary to be made, for if you are endeavouring after a Fox, whom you imagine

never to have been made shy or caught in a trap, the method of trailing, as laid down in the first instance, may be followed, and then one ball will be sufficient to be put in the path, which he will readily go up to and take, and in order still to be more certain of his footsteps, take the foot of a Fox and print it in fine mould or sand, but the former is better if it can be got, the latter when dry being apt to run; by observing this rule you will readily know the print of his foot, wherever you see it.

When the plan has succeeded to your wishes, and the Fox has taken one of the balls as he came in, it is ten to one but he dies before he gets out again, as was the case with the dog and bitch Fox before mentioned; and if you print him in, and not print him out, then you may hunt for him with your dog, being certain that he is still lurking somewhere in the ground.

In some places where traps have not been set for them, they may be catched as easy as

a dog; I have taken them in a cube, where a trap for a dog has been set: the cube is formed in the manner as represented in pl. 1, fig. 2. F. by the cut therein annexed, and may be made in the centre where two paths cross, or in a warren, or park, or at any gate or stile where he comes in: if you do not find that he comes in at any of the above places over your shrapes, you must, as you go round the sides of the path, gates, and stiles, mind whether you see his billots, that is, his dung, the term being to say after he has dunged that he has billoted; if you should not rightly know it, take up what you imagine to be the same, and break it, and you will find it to be full of large black-beetles; sometimes you may smell him, then look about very nicely, and it is ten to one but he has billoted somewhere near the place.

Let your cube be made after this manner, draw a circle, [pl. 1. fig. 2. F.] but in the front leave just room for the trap to go in when set, then bank it up all round from one side of the jaw of the trap quite round to the

other; set your traps in the same manner as you see in the plan of it, but be sure to moss them as before directed, for the moss preserves the fine mould from running under the bridge, and at the same time keeps it up hollow that it may strike freely and properly, but when the mould runs in, it sets the trap so hard that it is impossible for it to strike at all. If you are in a warren, put some rabbit's guts in the back part of the cube; if these cannot be procured, place some pieces of strong rotten Cheshire cheese, which they are very greedy of; if at a farm, get some bits of dead fowl, if possible, and if in a field, it is probable you may find some of the mangled carcases of lambs, which they have killed and hid pieces of them in the ground, which they often do: but remember, in all these particular cases, to put the bait in the back part of the cube as before hinted; and whenever you set a trap for a Fox, let it be placed early in the afternoon, in order that the soil you make may go off before he comes, and when you have set them, cover them with a bush cut on purpose, to keep any thing else

from striking it, till you come round at night and uncover it again.

In many country places there are people, who make it their business to take Foxes out of their earths for gentlemen to hunt them at their pleasure; these are properly called bag foxes. I have known in some stony countries that they set stone traps for them at their earths, so that it is impossible for them to get out without being taken, but of this method of catching them I cannot speak from my own experience, having been only a spectator of the traps, and of consequence cannot be so able to judge of it, as where I have been the principal actor myself. I mention this to testify that I would not, even in the most minute circumstances, impose on my readers.

I have practised likewise the following method with good success, which may be imitated with great facility: Let the party employed go round and carefully search for their earthing-places, wherever they are, and make the mouths of them quite fine with mould;

then come again the next morning, and observe whether the earth has been trampled on, and if you see the prints of his feet tending outward and inward, you may then be assured that he is safe within his hole or earth, on which take a good strong hay-net, such as are used in some warrens, pitched all around at a proper distance, put the sticks quite slight into the ground, that as soon as he strikes the net, it may fall upon and entangle him; but if you place it tight, he will tumble over, and by that means escape. Another caution is necessary; when you have set your net, you must put some bells in three or four different places, that you may hear when he strikes the net; then run in upon him, and keep him entangled, otherwise he will get out again, and seizing him by the poll or back part of his neck, muzzle him, and tie his fore legs together, that he may not scratch his muzzle off again; I have known a Fox, earthed as above, watched for two or three nights together, till he has been starved out, before they could catch him.

Sometimes when a Fox is found in the earth, or is hunted in, the method is to dig him out immediately, after the following manner: Take a good terrier, that is kept for that purpose, one that will lie at a Fox, then you must listen and sound him as the warreners do their line ferrets; dig a trench across the angle, and, when you have got to the angle, perhaps he will fly back, as they frequently do; then sink another trench near him, and when you have dug down to him, take care he does not bite you, as he is a fierce animal, when drove to desperation, and bites very hard; in the next place take your dog back, that you may get him out, this is what we call drawing him, as follows: Take an old hat, or any thing of a similar nature, in your hand, and dodge it before him, when he will catch hold of it immediately, then with the other hand catch him by the back part of the poll, with all possible quickness, as the motion must be, as it were, instantaneous; and this same method must be observed when you have one in a trap, if you have a mind to take him alive, and always

remember to have a muzzle ready to put on him directly, and put him into a sack, and then you may do what you please with him afterwards; what I mean by a muzzle is this, take a bit of strong tape, put it over his nose, bring both ends down under his jaw, and tie them tight together; then bring it along under his throat, an inch and half from the first knot, then tie them both together in one knot again, then bring the two ends up behind his ears and tie them tight, and this is what I call a muzzle, in the same manner as warreners muzzle their dogs to drive to the nets.

Having proceeded thus far in my description, &c. of this remarkable animal, I conclude what I have to say of him with the following recipe to take a shy dog Fox, which I have known to succeed when all other means have proved ineffectual, and likewise with another observation, neither of which are generally known.

The trail for him is, when you have taken

a bitch Fox, that goes a-clicketing, take and cut that vessel that contains her sperm, the same as the sow-gelders deprive bitches of, when they spay them, mixing with this some gum mastic, and put them as soon as possible, after being taken from the animal, into an earthen pot, keeping it quite close, and it will remain serviceable a whole year, and, when occasion offers, take a large piece of rind of bacon, broil it well on a gridiron, and then dip it in the pot, using it as a trail, in the same manner as the sheep's paunch before described.

The last remark I shall make is, that there is one season of the year when a Fox will not run after a trail at all, at least very rarely, and that is in the spring, when he gets plenty of young rabbits and leverets; for then he is dainty; when this is the case, another method must be taken: at this time of the year the bitch Fox goes what is called *a-clicketing*, you must mind which way he comes, which may be done by sifting some fine mould in all the little bye paths, and when

you have discovered the right one, place two steel traps, about twenty yards' distance from each other, for fear he should miss one, but lay no bait for him, and if he comes, there is the greatest probability of his being caught; I have often been forced to act in this manner, and have succeeded.

THE OTTER.

The Otter is an amphibious animal, which preys both by land and water, for when he is disturbed in the water he preys by land: as a proof of which, I once catched a dog Otter in a warren, where he came to prey on the rabbits, after the old bitch Otter and all the young cubs had been killed, down at the river, not far from the warren.

The Otter generally frequents rivers and brooks, in order to search for his prey, and will often come to fish-ponds likewise, destroying the fish, and yet not lie there; the method to discover his haunts is very easy, for, in whatever place he preys, you will be certain to find tails, or hinder parts of the fish, left undevoured, at the sides of the ponds, &c. for it is observable that he eats

the head and body of the fish, as far as the vent, and very seldom any farther; look all round the pond, and by his marks or foot-steps, you will find where he enters the pond, and likewise where he comes out to eat the fish by the side, for no amphibious animal devours his prey in the water, or can remain a single moment under it, longer than he can hold his breath. When you have discovered the place, it will be advisable to put a good strong steel trap in the water, down in the mud; put the mud over the bridge of the trap as much as you can, that he may not discover the trap. I have catched several this way. If you should not happen to find where he takes the water, you will see where he sits to eat his fish, and then you must set a trap or two by the side of the water, in different places, where you find the bits of fish; cut a hole in the ground to let them in, just flush or even with the ground, then cover them over with moss very nicely: but, in my opinion, there is no necessity to bait them, for the Otter will seldom, I believe never, touch any thing but what he kills himself. I may

possibly be mistaken in this point, but after many repeated trials never could get him to touch any bait I set for him.

The Otter in rivers and brooks has a kennel, which, with proper notice, as before given, you will find; the structure of it is very ingenious and admirable, indeed not equal to that of the beaver, though in some instances of a similar construction, for they always have two ways to go in and out, one by land and the other by water, for such is the cunningness and sagacity of these vermin towards their preservation, that if disturbed by land, they can vent or escape by water, and if attacked by water they can escape by land; now when you have found out these kennels, and discern that they use and frequent it, look carefully about, and you will see some of his landing-places, where he sits and eats his prey, and before the spot where he lands, there put a trap down in the water as already directed in the ponds, where I have caught them, and likewise destroyed

all the young ones in the kennel, but know no bait in particular they are fond of, as before observed; though others may be of a contrary opinion.

In many places where I have been, small hounds have been employed in destroying these vermin, called Otter hounds; when one is unkennelled, he immediately goes to the bottom of the water, where he remains as long as his breath will hold out, which is a considerable time; he then goes under the bank, or under some reeds or boughs, there he draws breath and blubbers the water; the term when he is perceived by any of his pursuers is to say, There he vents; and they strike at him with a spear made for that purpose, and often kill him, but if the spear misses, he sets off again and the dogs follow, and if good seldom miss of killing him.

The above animal is not footed like other vermin, for they have a web between each claw, like many water fowls, which greatly

accelerates their motion in swimming, when pursued by the dogs; they have no heel, but a round ball under the sole of the foot, the track of which is called their mark, and their dung is called their sprents.

THE BADGER.

He is a grey hard-haired animal, a good deal of the pig kind; and is not near so hurtful as many other animals of the vermin kind; for the chief mischief he does, consists in scratching of earths, or holes, which afterwards serve for earth for the foxes to harbour in, and in scratching and grubbing up the ground, in searching after his food, such as pig-nuts and roots, on which, and on beech mast, acorns, crabs, and other trash, he subsists, but does not prey on living things of any kind, as has been asserted by some authors, who have falsely affirmed that he destroys and lives on young lambs, pigs, and poultry; and in consequence of the simplicity of his food, I have known, in some places, people will eat them, being generally very fat, and their flesh exceedingly sweet.

I have practised two methods of taking the Badger with great success, the first of which is, when you have found out one of their earths, let two persons go out in the night, while they are in search of their food, and put a thin sack into the hole, and fasten it at the mouth, that the Badger may not run away with it; then let one person remain near the hole, while the other beats round the fields with a dog, in order to drive him home; when he finds the dog after him, he runs to his hole as fast as possible, and goes into the sack, which slips close like a purse; the party who stayed near the hole, on hearing his approach, lays hold of the mouth of the sack, and pulls out the Badger in it, and this method is termed, Sacking the Badger. Another way is to place a steel trap, in which you will catch him very easily, as he is nothing near so shy as the fox; when you come to his earths or holes, make the mouths of all the angles quite smooth, and come again the next morning, when you will see whether any have been in or gone out, and if you

track him in and out, then put a trap in each earth, in the same manner as you did for the fox, and you need not fear catching him; but remember to stake down your trap, that he may not go away with it.

THE

SHEEP-KILLING DOG.

THIS animal is extremely pernicious and detrimental, wherever he exists, for when once a Dog takes to killing sheep, he seldom or never leaves the practice off; in which he is extremely shy, and it is a very difficult matter to put a stop to his proceedings till you can discover his owner, which is no easy task, for if once he perceives you are tracing him home, he will go two or three miles another way.

If it happens that he should come in the night, and destroy any of your lambs or sheep, the circumstance becomes very alarming, and the farmer generally moves his sheep into another field or place; this certainly will

baulk him for some small time, till he finds them again, and then the consequence is as bad as ever; I would therefore advise not to move your flocks at all, for the following reason, that by this means you may be sooner able to destroy him. To this end, go early in the morning into the field where the sheep are, which is always customary, every morning, among the farmers, then you will find whether he has been amongst and killed any of them: if you perceive this to be the case, inspect carefully all round the field, whether you can track, or see the print of his feet, at any gate, stile, or gap, if there be one, if you look carefully it is ten to one but you trace his footsteps; this being done, you may prepare for him against night in the following manner: Get two good steel traps, set one of them by the side of the gate, stile, or gap, where you imagine he enters, within-side of the field, in the same manner as before directed for the fox in a cube trap, and cover the same, but do not handle the mould; then take the liver of the sheep or lamb he has devoured, cut them into slices, fry them in

some good dripping, and put them on the back part of the cube; then take a piece of the flesh of the sheep or lamb, and rub it all about the gate or stile, &c. in order that he may be allured by the scent; then set another trap in the same manner at a different gate, for fear he should not come in the same way: a farmer is sometimes at a loss for these traps, but if he lives adjacent to any warren, he may easily borrow two of the true sort; but for fear of an accident it would not be amiss for the farmer to have them always by him. The above directions being put into execution, get a sheep's paunch and draw a trail all round the field, as you do for the fox, and draw it up close to the mouth of each cube or trap, and by these means I have frequently catched several of them.

In some country places where they have none of the aforesaid traps, people are at a loss how to proceed; the subsequent method will supply their place in some measure, and be attended with success: When you have discovered in the morning, that he has been

among the sheep over-night, get some good dripping as big as a tennis ball, rasp two good figs of nux vomica, and mix them together, stiffened with a little flour; make several of these balls, and at evening trail a sheep's paunch, tied to a string, to each gate, stile, or gap, where you imagine he enters, putting one of these balls at every place, fixt on the top of a small piece of stick, about six inches high, with the other end in the ground, which will prevent the mice from eating it; when you have trailed to one place, there stick the ball, trailing on to the next in like manner, till you have gone quite round the field; let this be done just at dark, and go again in the morning, and observe how many balls are gone, the remaining ones take up, and put them down again at night, and so proceed till you find he has swallowed some of them, of which there is no fear if he chance to come.

I have sometimes been greatly embarrassed in catching him, though I have fully discovered the place at which he came into the

field to destroy the sheep; for he was so extremely shy that he would not follow the trail, nor touch any bait laid for him. I then took the following method, viz. just at the gate where he came in, I procured two radded hurdles and put them close at one end, top and bottom; and at the extremity of the end so closed, I tied a live lamb, and at the other end where the opening was, I set two steel traps close by each other, and in the room they did not fill up, I placed a large bush to supply the vacancy. These traps were covered very nicely, in the same manner as for the fox; the plan succeeded, and the arch thief was happily taken. If it should be a Dog that comes, procure some of the urine of a proud bitch, and rub it about the trail, or the bait, which will infallibly bring him on, let him be ever so shy, and induce him to go boldly up to the trap and be caught.

THE HOUSE CAT,

TURNED WILD.

This domestic animal is so well known as to need no description here, and is very useful in a family, but frequently they will run wild in woods, parks, chases, or forests, and do infinitely more mischief than many vermin naturally wild, and become entirely the reverse of what they were originally intended for.

They attack their prey with surprising ferocity, equal to that of a tiger, and are very hurtful in gentlemen's grounds, such as wood-walks, pheasantries, chicken-grounds, or places where poultry is kept; where they destroy the young pheasants, chickens, ducks, rabbits, and leverets. I have killed seven of these Cats in one week, in a gentleman's

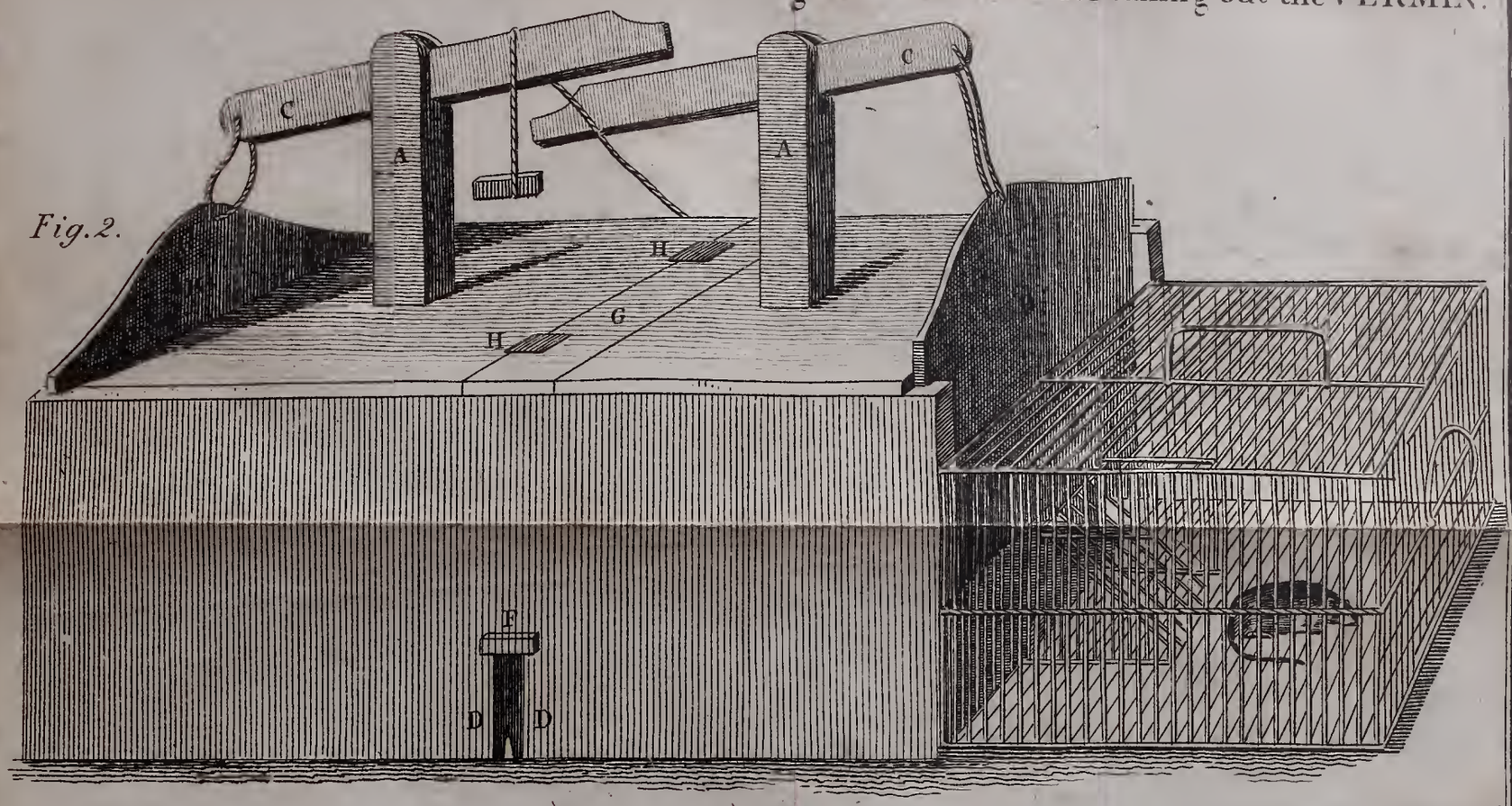
chicken-ground, where they came and destroyed almost all his Chinese and other pheasants, Bantam and Guinea fowls, and other curious poultry, both domestic and of foreign extraction, also his tame rabbits; on all which he set the greatest value. I have caught divers of them in a warren, who have rambled several miles to come for their prey, for there is a kind of these creatures, besides those that live in the woods, which generally reside about farm-houses, and at night go out to prowl, and are of no service to the owner. As a proof of this, a farmer happening to come to the warren, who lived about three miles distant, owned one of the cats killed that morning, which had left his house the preceding evening. I have caught thirty wild Cats in a season, at the same warren, and we had but two houses near us, upwards of a mile distant each way, by which it appears how far these animals will ramble in search of their prey.

I now proceed to the manner of taking them. When you find they come to any of

the fore-mentioned places, get a common box trap, or hutch trap, [pl. II. fig. 1.] such as are used in warrens; let it be nine inches wide, full ten inches high in the clear, and three feet long. Let the standards A. A. be placed in the centre, on the top of the trap, ten inches from the end B. B, which must slide up and down in a groove; let the standards be twelve inches high, with a notch cut in each, two inches deep, and three quarters of an inch wide, that the swords C. C. may have free room to play by the side of each other. Let the bridge be eight inches square, and then there will be a clear inch in length for the bridge to play; then get a piece of wood, half an inch thick, and an inch and a half square, make a hole in the middle, and place it at the bottom of the trap, up against the back, in the centre, afterwards put a nail through without a head, fasten it down to the bottom of the trap, the nail standing up half an inch, then there will be room for the bridge to hang on: make a hole at one end of the bridge, in the centre, place it on the nail;

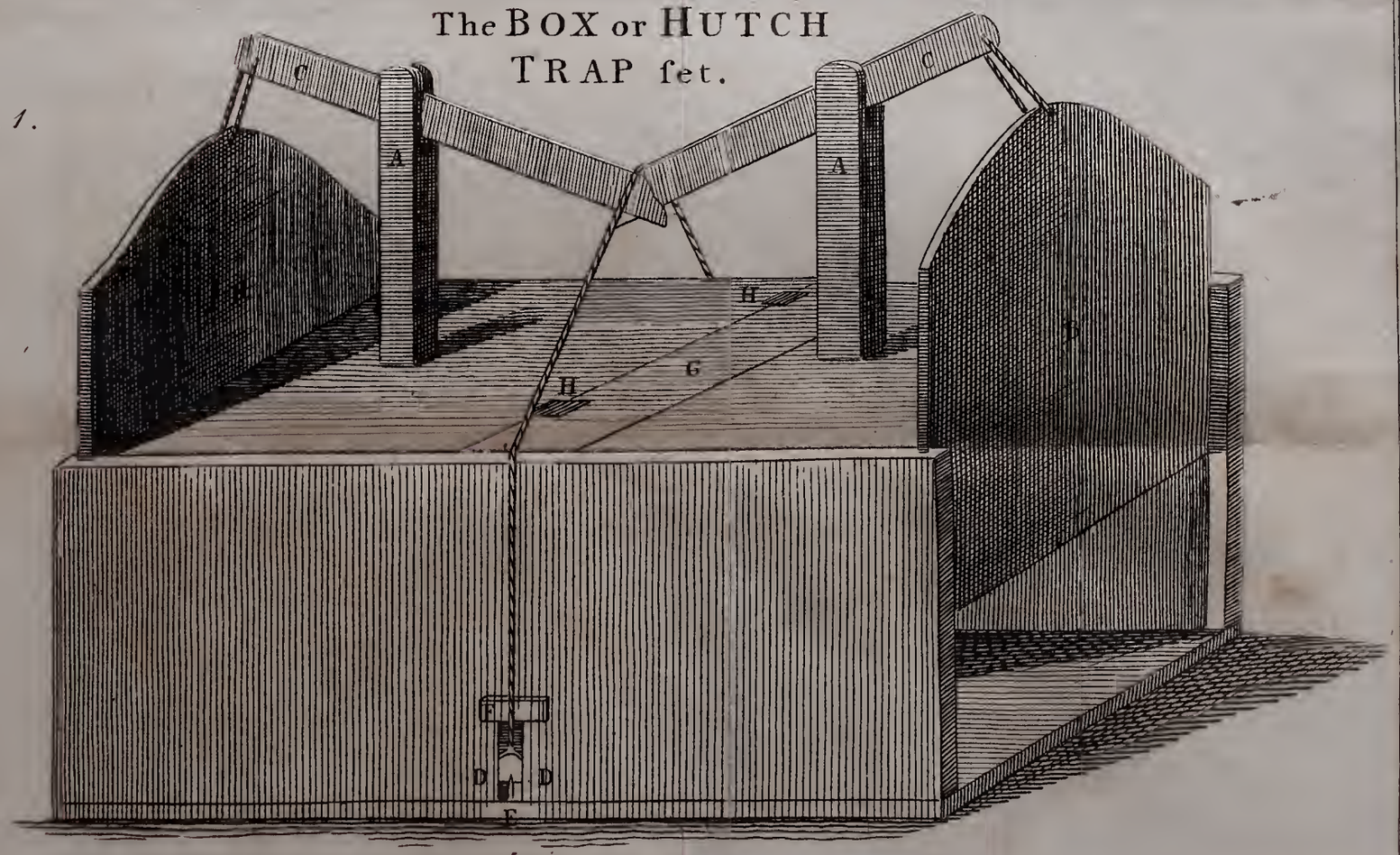
Plate II. The BOX or HUTCH TRAP ſtruck ſhewing also the CAGE for taking out the VERMIN. *p.36.*

Fig. 2.



The BOX or HUTCH TRAP ſet.

Fig. 1.



in the other end put a strong piece of wire, and cut a trigger-hole in the front of the trap, towards the bottom, exactly in the middle, three inches high, and half an inch wide, D. D. and be careful to have the inside of the trigger or tiller hole lined on each side the edges with narrow pieces of tin, which will prevent its being gnawed, and the trap from being defaced, for all vermin, whether cats, rats, *&c.* will constantly gnaw and scratch wherever they see light; then let the wire E, at the side of the bridge go through the trigger-hole D. D. a small matter turned up at the end, that it may hitch to the tiller, which is the small piece of wood tied to the end of the string, then fix a little bit of wood, F, half an inch above the trigger-hole, on the outside of the trap, as a stop for the trigger. But some people are apt to put the tiller in the hole, where it often hangs and prevents the trap from striking, whereas, if placed as directed, it cannot hang in the least, but must strike and take the enemy; whom in order to secure, when taken, let a piece of wood, about half an

inch high, be nailed to the bottom of the trap, on the inside, close to where the door falls, at each end; this will hinder any light from coming in, and prevent the vermin from scratching the door up again, as I have known it sometimes done.

The next step in the formation of the trap is, to take out a bit of the wood from the centre of the top board G, six inches wide, cut slanting on one side, and directly or straight down on the other, with a small tenant saw, which will waste but little of the board, and may readily be taken in and out, over the bridge, and is convenient to put the bait in. Fix a small piece of wood under the lid, the whole length, excepting the thickness of the sides, to keep it from sliding in or out, and on the even side of the lid, put two small wooden hasps, H. H. which will keep it fast on that side, and that side cut under or aslant holds fast likewise; then in the back part of the trap, in the centre, above the bridge, drive a nail through, and turn it up with a hook, to hang

the bait on. I have now described the trap to catch this dangerous enemy, with the greatest minuteness, but for the reader's better understanding the nature and meaning of the same, I have annexed a beautiful copper-plate, containing an exact view or representation of it, with references answering to the foregoing explanation.

This being done, take some valerian powder, and scatter it in and about the trap, for they are fond of valerian-root to a degree of extravagancy, rolling themselves about when they come near it, purring, and seeming to be as it were in an ecstacy; if you have no valerian at hand, put some pieces of marum or cat-thyme into the trap, which they are likewise fond of. Now for your bait, take some fishes' heads or bones, or a red herring, rubbing the end of the trap with the same, and hang it on the nail, in the back part, over the bridge: this they will eagerly catch at, it being an observation, that Cats love fish, but do not love

to wet their feet; yet I have known an instance to the contrary, having observed one of these Cats take the water like a spaniel, after the water-rats; but this is very rare and uncommon.

The bait being placed, take several red herrings, tie them together in a string, and draw a trail all round where you think they come, and likewise to the traps; and if they approach you need not fear of catching them. If you find your trap down in the morning, one caution is necessary, which is, not to lift up the door of the trap, to discover what kind of animal you have taken, it being possible that some other vermin may have got in, for if it should prove to be a wild cat, the moment she sees light she will strike at your face with her claws, and endanger your eye-sight, and probably make her escape, having once been served so myself; I would therefore recommend to take a thin sack, draw the end thereof to the end of the trap, so far that it be in the

sack's mouth, which you must draw up tight, then rattle the other end, and the Cat will bolt out into the sack, and holding the mouth tight, gather it together and you may do what you please with it.

THE MARTEN CAT.

This is a very curious and beautiful animal, not commonly known, even by many connoisseurs in natural history, and is the largest of the ferret-kind; he seldom or never comes near any dwelling-houses or farm-yards, but delights in solitariness, frequenting lone forests, chaces, woods, and other desert places: however, I knew one that used to run tame about the kitchen of the Bald-Face Stag, on Epping-Forest; they have no strong disagreeable scent, like the polecat, weasel, and other stinking animals of a similar nature, but are reckoned the sweetest of the vermin kind; I caught several one winter, on the aforesaid forest, and sold their skins for four shillings and sixpence each, for the sake of the fur, which is exceedingly good.

Their lodging-places are in old crows' or magpies nests, and sometimes in a woodpecker's hole, and in hollow trees: I have traced them in the snow, and when they take to a tree they will go from one to another with incredible swiftness like a squirrel, till they settle themselves in some or other of the places before mentioned, where you are likely to find them. They are very fond of birds of all kinds, particularly the wood-pigeon, or ring-dove, and turtle-dove, which in the night-time they take from their roosting-places. Now when you have discovered by their tracks, either in the earth or snow, where they go, place a common box or hutch trap, such as they use in warrens, [pl. II. fig. 1.] bait it with a bird, in the same manner as I before described for the wild cat, pick off some of the bird's feathers, and strew them through the inside of the trap, from one end to the other, and hang the bird on a nail; this is the way I have caught several of them; but in some places I have known them hunted with hounds,

when they are sure to lead the dogs through the thickest covers they can find. They are not an animal that abounds in great numbers, but rather scarce to be found; I make this observation, because many persons are entirely ignorant of its existence, for which reason I have been more particular and exact in my account of this uncommon creature.

THE POLECAT.

This animal is distinguished by various appellations in different parts of the kingdom, being in most places called a Polecat, in some a Formet, and in others a Fitchet, and by one or other of the above three names he is known all over England.

He is a very subtle and pernicious creature, being a mortal enemy to fowls of all kinds, and doing prodigious mischief in warrens, by destroying the young rabbits; for when once they take to a burrow, consisting of a large number of holes or angles, they either kill or drive the rabbits away, who, by instinct, shun so dangerous a foe; in the hen-houses they are equally destructive, and when they have killed a fowl, they drag it away, if they can get it through the hole

they enter in at, but they have one good property, that is, that if they can get what they have killed away, whether fowl or rabbit, they will eat of it as long as it remains sweet, before they return back to kill any more; in this circumstance differing from the weasel and stoat, who, after they have destroyed their prey, only suck the blood out, and very seldom take it away, but leave the flesh behind untouched; if therefore you miss any of your fowls, or find any of them in part devoured, it will be an almost infallible criterion for you to distinguish that the mischief has been done by these vermin.

In order the better to destroy them, I would recommend this method: At night, after your fowls are gone to roost, mind to sift some sand before every little hole you suspect he may come in at, and look at them again in the morning early, before the fowls are moving, and you will soon discern the prints of their feet by their trampling about; then set a common hutch trap, such as are used in warrens, [pl. II. fig. 1.] and bait it

with a piece of fowl or small bird of any kind; hang the bait on the nail, over the bridge, as has been observed before, and if you should catch one of them, remember to make the print of his feet in the sand, which will enable you the better to know it another time, which has been my own constant practice, to discover what kind of vermin has been there in any shrape, whether made by sprinkling mould or sand; and if you should not have a hutch trap in your possession, then put at the place where you have tracked him, a small steel trap, and place a brick on each side, so that he cannot avoid coming over the trap, which must be covered nicely with fine mould; do this in the afternoon, then cover it with a thin board, that the fowls may not spring it in going to roost, then take the board or shelter away, and go in the morning before the fowls move, and if you should not catch him the first night, observe the same methods for a few nights more, and you will be sure of him.

THE STOAT.

This animal in some places is called a *Cain*, and is the worst small vermin that exists, for if they approach to any warren, pheasantry, or chicken-garden, they do incredible mischief, for whatever they kill they seldom eat, but only suck their blood, on which account they are more destructive and pernicious by far, than all the vermin of the ferret-kind put together, as I have known one to kill a dozen fowls in a chicken-garden in the space of one night, and then let them remain behind, after having sucked out the blood at the side of the neck; but I cannot help here taking notice of a remarkable circumstance, that is almost peculiar to this subtle animal, which is, that they will start a hare from his form, and follow it by the scent, as true as the hound, till he comes up to it again; when

they will slily fasten on the side of the neck, and there hang till the hare sinks down with loss of blood, and then is left untouched by the Stoat, in regard to the flesh, and in this manner I have shot many Stoats hanging on a hare's back, for if you should chance to be near where this happens, you will hear the hare cry, which will direct you which way the affrighted animal is coming, be then ready with your gun, and it will be next to a miracle if you miss shooting him.

In the same manner I have shot these vermin in warrens, for in going by some of the burrows, I have heard a rabbit cry under ground, which occasioned me to remain a short time by the side of the burrow, when of a sudden the rabbit has bolted out with the Stoat on its back, which I have then immediately shot dead, and by this method have killed great numbers of them.

Now in all chicken-gardens and pheasantries, two or more hutch or box traps, should always remain set under the walls or pales,

baited with any small bird, rabbit's or fowl's guts, when the person who looks after the fowls may likewise take a proper survey of the traps, by which means they might be caught before they entered within side and did the mischief, which otherwise must necessarily ensue. Let the traps be placed on the outside, close under the walls or pales, with the back part against the same: make a wing or low paling, about eighteen inches high, with old pales, or form a small hedge, about the same height, from each end of the trap, extending four or five yards aslant, and about two or three yards open at the end from the wall, which will be a guide for them to enter into the trap, for they love to run under such places, and unless prevented in proper time, by the method here laid down, they will enter and destroy great numbers of rabbits, pheasants, and poultry, in a single night's time; in most warrens, therefore, it is generally customary, to have traps constantly set and baited, otherwise you would soon not have any rabbits left therein. In hare-warrens, likewise, hutch

or box traps should be placed in divers parts of the warren, with the two ends painted white, and rubbed over with the guts of any animal, which will prevent the hares from entering in, but allure the vermin; let them be always baited in the same manner as before observed; and if you find they likewise come to your hen-houses, use the same method, and they will naturally come into the trap and be catched; and in case you should not have a hutch trap, set a small steel trap, as before directed for the polecat, and you will be certain of securing him.

THE WEASEL.

The Weasel is the smallest vermin of the ferret kind, and is a very noxious little animal, in many particulars resembling the stoat, last described, but is not capable, on account of its size, of doing half so much mischief, though they will destroy young hares, rabbits, and chickens, and, sucking out their blood, leave them behind; but in one instance it is extremely pernicious in chicken-gardens, hen-houses, &c. by sucking the eggs in great abundance; they begin by making a small hole at one end, at which they lick the yolk out, and leave the shell behind, whereas the rats, on the contrary, always drag the eggs out of the nest and carry them away, making a large hole in the egg, and sometimes break the shell in half, in order to get at the yolk, which the Weasel will

not; by the above observation you will distinguish what animal has destroyed your eggs, and lay your trap accordingly. In some cases Weasels are serviceable, for they will kill mice, water-rats, young house-rats, but the old Norway rat they are afraid to attack, shunning him if possible with the greatest assiduity: they will likewise destroy moles, having sometimes catched them in mole-traps.

When you have discovered that they have destroyed your chickens, or sucked your eggs, get a hutch or box trap, and bait it with a small bird or egg, for I have catched many by baiting with an egg, and if you should be at a loss to know at which place he enters, make some shrapes, either with sand or fine mould, as before described, and when you have discovered which way he comes, place some small steel traps, and it will be a thousand to one but what you catch him; and when you have taken any of these vermin, make an impression of their feet in some fine sand, and you will be able to dis-

tinguish them another time: and if this was strictly observed, it would be possible for you to know if even a mouse had entered your parlour or dining room, by sifting some sand all over the bottom of the room at night, the last thing you do; then lock the door, and in the morning you will see which way they come in and out; which remark will serve for all these kind of vermin in general. I conclude my account of this creature in describing an odd method by which I have killed them, viz. when I have observed one run into a hedge, by standing at a proper distance from the place, and imitating the squeaking of a mouse, I have enticed the Weasel to come out to the side of the hedge, and then shot him dead, and by this method I have destroyed several of them.

THE FERRET.

Of these animals there are two kinds or species, the white Ferret and the polecat Ferret, so called from its great resemblance to the polecat, but they are certainly two distinct animals, though by many persons imagined to be one and the same, and confounded together; and as a proof of this distinction, I have had several excellent Ferrets killed by the polecat, when turned into the rabbit burrows, wherein the polecat had taken prior possession.

Ferrets are much used by the warreners in the following manner: When the young rabbits become of a tolerable bigness or growth, they go to the holes where they have been observed, with a dog Ferret, and turn him in with a long small line round his neck, and

the other end of the line in their hands; if he goes a considerable way in, and finds no game, they draw him out again, and put him into another hole; and when they perceive by the line that he has struck at one of them, the line is gently drawn out, and he will bring the rabbit out in his mouth; the Ferret's throat is then pressed, or squeezed close, in order that he may quit his prey, and then he is turned in again: this method the reader may practise with success, and take all the young rabbits out of their burrows, be their number ever so great: but one caution is necessary to be observed, which is, not to lay the rabbits, as you take them, in the wind of the Ferret, this will baulk your sport, for if he scents or winds them, he will not keep in the ground; in the course of my practice I have tried a great number of holes, in some of which he has gone six or seven fathom in almost straight or horizontal angles, generally about three or four feet deep under the earth before he found his prey, but these are too great lengths to draw them, and would be losing too much time; but if

you find the rabbits at about three fathom deep, it will answer your purpose, though you may try different angles or holes, and take your game at the nighest; the above method is what is termed drawing them with a Line-Ferret.

In the winter season, when you are endeavouring to take the rabbits, and you cannot get them to bolt or come out of their holes, the following expedient may be put into execution, in order to take great numbers of them together: Make use of the Line-Ferret as before, turn him into one of the holes or angles till he finds them, but let him not remain there long enough to lay hold of the rabbits, then put him in at another, and so in like manner into all, and in the nighest angle you find them, there turn in the Ferret, and let him lie while you can sound him; what is meant by sounding is, you must listen about where you think the line goes, with your ear to the ground, and where you hear him, dig a trench cross the hole, just behind the place where you sounded,

down to the line, then follow the line till you come to him, and in all probability you will take a great number of rabbits; and this is the reason of trying the Ferret in so many different angles before you let him lie, for by this method they are driven together, for if you were to let him lie at first, perchance you might have the trouble of digging for only a single rabbit, for they do not keep in any great degree together till driven so by the means aforesaid; but remember not to muzzle your Line-Ferret.

Another method of catching them is, by what is termed starting or bolting; to this end take the bitch or she Ferret and muzzle and use it in this manner, where there are any rabbits in burrows or at hedges, which you intend to destroy; when you first approach to the place, remember to take the wind of it, and fix a small purse-net, made for the purpose, called a Flan in some countries, at each hole, do this as still and silent as possible, then put in the Ferrets at the lee-side of the burrow, in order that you

may have the wind of the rabbits, and stand at the lee-side yourself, not making the least noise, for though many persons have a notion, that do what you will the rabbits will not start, yet this is a mistake, for if they hear a noise above ground they will fly down into their lower holes, till they can run no further, then the Ferret gets behind them and scratches them till they bleed, in which situation it is impossible for him to get before to drive them out into the net, and this is the reason I enjoin a strict silence, for then he catches them in their upper angles, on which they bolt out immediately, for they never lie in the lower ones till they are disturbed above ground; it is therefore a mistaken notion of a great many people, to hunt and drive in all the rabbits they can find before they put the Ferrets into the ground, but this method is entirely wrong, if you intend to start or bolt them, for if they are once driven to ground, it is ten to one if they move, but will lie and be scratched to death: but if you hunt them with a Line-Ferret, you will then have nothing to do but to sound your Ferret, and dig them out as before directed.

I shall here beg leave to make a remark relative to a bad practice of the warreners, who make too frequent use of Ferrets, which method I entirely disapprove of; for, was I in possession of a warren, which I occupied for my livelihood, I would never put a Ferret into the ground at all, as it does a warren infinite prejudice and damage; it makes the rabbits forsake their own home, and run away, and lie out till they are killed, for they have a fixed antipathy against entering into the ground where there is the least smell of the Ferret; they have the same dislike to other vermin, and the Ferret is as bad as any of them; my own method of catching rabbits is, by nets made into pound pitches, and then you may sort them as you think proper, the best you may turn over the net and the worst you may kill; on the contrary, the Ferret has no respect to either, but will destroy the good as well as the bad.

The Ferret, as has been before observed, in many instances resembles the polecat, and if one should get away from his hutch, and get into the garden or field, if you should

chance to get him again, he becomes so wild that you can scarcely venture to touch him. I have catched them at the hen-house, in a farm-yard, where they come to kill the fowls, for, being set by some people to drive out the rats, they sometimes lose one, when he preys about as the polecat does; and will sometimes feed upon young rats, but as to the old ones those he does not choose to face, for I have had several good Ferrets as could be, all beat by an old rat, which they will not touch, except they are very sharp-set and hungry; this experiment I have made by keeping one fasting for a day and a night, and then he killed an old fierce rat and eat him presently. This affords a useful lesson, for if you are going to make use of your Ferrets for any business, keep them fasting for some time before, they being of a very sluggish disposition, and when their bellies are full they will not hunt after any thing, or work in the least: I have often turned them into holes after rats, when, if they find a nest of young ones, they will eat them, and if sufficient to satisfy their hunger, they will hunt

after no more prey, but fall asleep, for they only go in search of it to serve themselves, and when their bellies are full, you may hunt by yourself; this is the true nature of the Ferret.

In some places people employ them instead of cats, in destroying rats, when they often prove of good service, especially in under floors of any kind, and when they lie between the boards, but in cielings and common sewers they are not so serviceable; in the first they can do no good, and in the latter they do not much care to wet their feet, except when sharp-set, and then they will seize the rat, which sometimes bolts from the Ferret, and is driven into a narrow angle or corner, where being kept at bay and made desperate, he maintains a fierce combat with the Ferret, and makes him retire with his face and head terribly bitten and bloody.

THE HEDGEHOG.

This little animal greatly resembles the porcupine, though in miniature, his body being armed and fortified all over with sharp-pointed quills, which is an admirable defence for him against his enemies. It has been asserted by some writers, and is a notion commonly received, that it will suck the milk of cows in the night time, while they are asleep in the fields, and bite the dug in such manner that the cow never recovers; but this opinion I believe to be false and erroneous, having never been able, after many years strict enquiry and observance, to discover a single instance of it; their chief food consists in acorns, crabs, and roots, in grubbing up of which latter they damage the ground; you may catch them by setting a hutch trap under the wall or pale of any park or warren,

as these animals will run under them in the night a considerable way, having taken several of them by this method in the course of a week. I recommend it therefore as the most preferable, as few dogs will venture to kill them, their quills being so extremely sharp, and when they find they are pursued or attacked, they immediately roll themselves up round as a globe or ball, and lie as if they were dead; but put them into a puddle or pan of water, and they will expand themselves immediately. I know of no particular bait they are fond of.

THE NORWAY RAT.

This vermin was brought originally from Norway to England, in ships trading for timber, &c. to that country, and being of foreign extraction, they are commonly, though erroneously, called in many places, the *Hanover* Rat.

There are few buildings, either in town or country, that are not troubled and pestered with them. Now you must carefully observe what part of the building they frequent; examine the sewers or shores, for they will find their way up them where there is no grate, and if there is one, they will gnaw through a soft brick, and scratch the dirt out by the side of the shore into it, and there lie dry, which often stops up and greatly detriments the shore. If there

are any hog-sties, where hogs are fattening in winter-time, the Rats without doors about the buildings, will repair to the sties; they are very apt to get under the floors, greatly to the damage of the houses; they will likewise get behind the wainscots, and in ceilings, and make a noise that is very disagreeable to the family: it is necessary, therefore, to mind where they go in and out, for some way they must of necessity have, as they cannot remain there long without meat and water. In order therefore for the better discovery of the same, sift some sand about, and if any move, you will easily see which way they go, for this is an infallible method to betray all vermin; in the same manner, if the comparison may be allowed, as Daniel, in the Apocrypha, traced the footsteps of the men, women, and children, coming in at the private door, by means of sifting some ashes. In the country sometimes they will lie out in the fields and hedges, as long as any corn remains upon the ground, and breed in the most prolific manner, for I have known them frequently bring forth twelve young ones at

one time; and I once caught an old female Rat, that had given suck with sixteen teats; and as a still farther proof of their fruitfulness, I have known them breed when only half-grown; but in this case they have had only three or four young ones at a time. But to return: when the cold weather comes on, they flock in prodigious numbers to the houses and other buildings; they likewise repair to the barns and wheat-ricks, and sometimes I have known them take to the ricks, notwithstanding they have been placed on stands, for they will jump up on the top of the stones placed as a safe-guard, with surprising agility, which it was imagined was impossible for them to do, and get into the ricks, where they always make holes in the thatch. I have known them take to hay-ricks and get to the top of the thatch, and bite through the straw, in search of what little corn may be left in the same; so that the stacks or ricks have been obliged to be thatched again.

Having given a general description of these

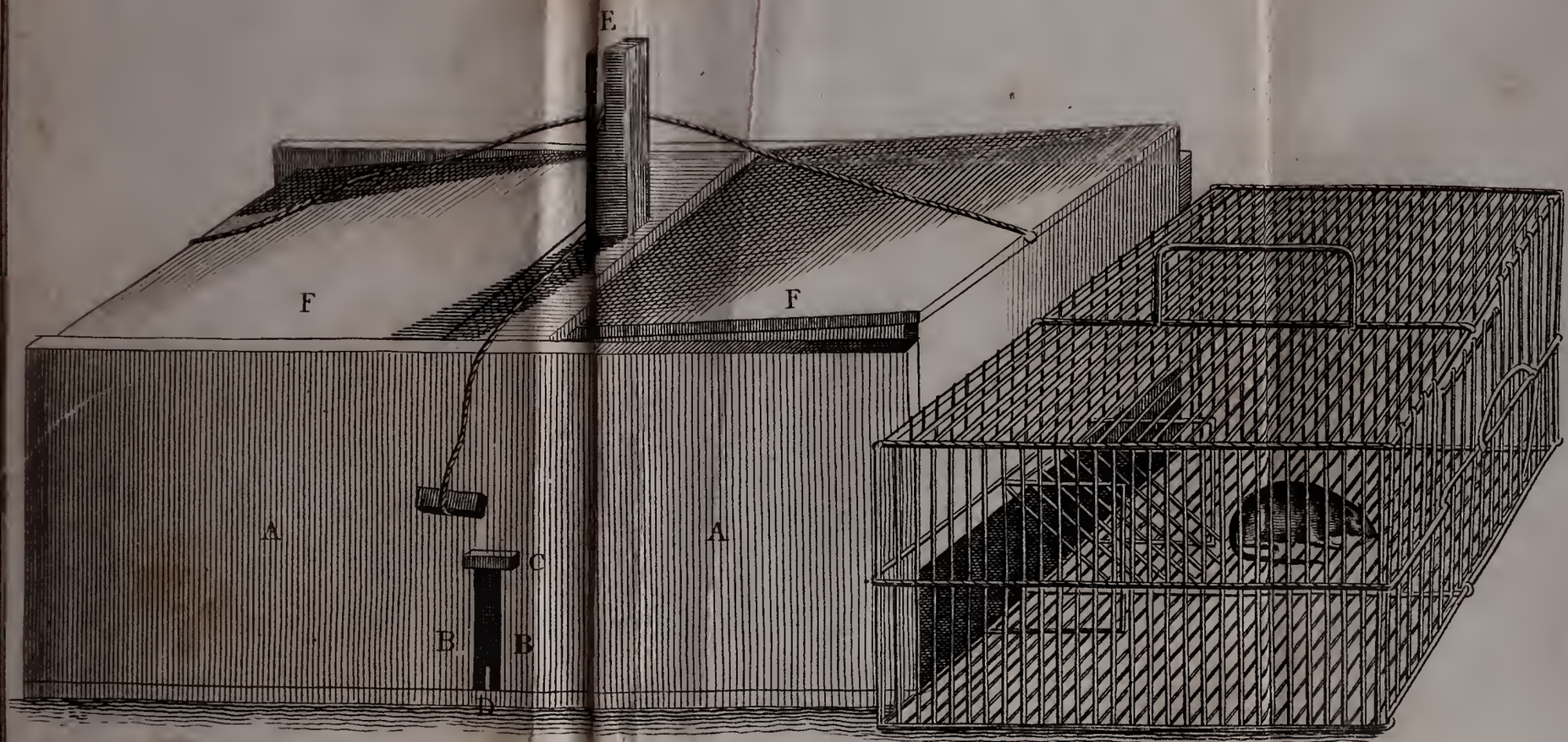
animals, I now proceed to point out the methods of catching them, in the various places they haunt; whether in the cellars, shores, hog-sties, barns, stables, slaughter-houses, brew-houses, still-houses, or any other place, be it what it will. When you have discovered their haunt, you must put a trap, hereafter to be described, as near the place as possible; put a small piece of stick across under each end of the trap, near the standard, to prevent it from falling down or striking, and it will remain in the same position as set, and the Rats have free liberty to go in and out at pleasure, in order to embolden them, before you set your traps in earnest to take them; then scent it, by a method hereafter to be explained, and it will not want scenting again for a twelvemonth; for it is my constant rule to scent them only once a year, which will be sufficient. Take some chaff of any kind, mix some wheat-corn with it, and put some about the bottom of the trap, this prevents them from any notion that it is a trap. If it be in a place where you cannot procure chaff, throw a handful of oats, bar-

ley, or malt, about the bottom; but chaff, mixed with some kind of corn, as before observed, is preferable. You will have occasion to do this only for the first time of setting the traps to work; for when once some Rats have been catched in them, and have pissed and dunged therein, they will be in better order for it; it is a wrong practice, therefore, in many people, to wash the trap clean before they set it again; on the contrary let the dung remain in it, for this reason, that the Rat will enter with greater confidence where he finds his brethren have been before him; but if it hinders the trap from striking, or it is got under the bridge, then take it out.

Now if you perceive that they come to four or five different places, I would advise, by all means, to put a trap at each place. Some people are afraid of a little expence, and make shift with one trap only, in which case you are obliged to move your traps about, which makes them shy, and missing some of their companions renders them still

shyer: mind therefore to have a trap at each place, set them all to feed at the same time, and put a little bundle of straw at each end, that they may go in and out privately; and if you cannot get any straw, shelter each end of the trap with some old boards, and keep them as private as possible, for this they like, and it will answer your intent the better. When your traps are all set, as near the places where they run as you can, you must feed them after the following manner: put some of the feed (the recipe to prepare which will be hereafter given) at their holes, scatter a little quite up to the end of the trap, and so along to the bridge within side, and there put a handful. When this is performed at each trap, you must stay two or three nights before you go to them, and you will see which trap they have eaten out of, perhaps from all of them, or possibly from one, as sometimes they are very shy; for I have known them to eat the food prepared for them, from their holes quite up to the trap, for a week before they would enter in; but when once they have entered in, and find

The RAT TRAP ſtruck, describing also the CAGE for taking out the VERMIN.



V. Woodthorpe sc. 19 Fetter Lane.

they are not hurt, they will then come freely enough. In the next place, when you go round to take a survey of your traps, take notice of those they have eaten out of, and put some more food in, but after the first time of feeding them, you need only put a handful on the bridge. Make it your rule to take this survey in the morning, and when you perceive they come to feed boldly and freely, then is the proper time to think of taking them; but for two or three nights previous to your catching them, when you have given them food in the morning, remember to look at the traps again at night; for if it be a quiet place they will feed by day-light, and where this happens, set those traps going in the day-time, and the rest in the evening; and as they are caught take them out of the trap, by means of a little wire cage; which is described at the end of the Rat-trap struck in pl. V. afterwards put them into the large cage, proceed in this manner till bed-time, and then put up all your traps again, that they cannot strike, by means of a small piece of a stick laid across,

under the ends, as before-mentioned, and put some more food in them, for two or three nights longer, till they are become bold; then set them all again; and this may be transacted without breaking your rest in the least; but in some places where they lie in the ceilings or behind the wainscots, they are not in motion till the house is still, and the family gone to rest, and where this happens you must sit up later, and when any person has this book in his possession, by following the directions therein carefully, he may easily get the better of these vermin.

When I have been catching these vermin at any nobleman or gentleman's house, after having been absent for some time, I have been obliged to sit up all the night, in order to keep their numbers under: but when a person is in the house or near the premises, there is no necessity of his losing his rest, or attending in so close a manner, because he may take his opportunity to catch them when he thinks proper; and on any night he fixes for that purpose, if any business should inter-

vene, that he cannot conveniently put his design into execution, then let him give them a little food again, and they will not be baulked. Be certain to remember this piece of advice, for when the Rats come for their supper, and you have neglected to leave them any, then they will be disappointed, and obliged to go to other places in search of food: therefore when you have some at feed, mind to keep them there at the different places, to which they will come with the greatest regularity, if not baulked; so continue, still feeding them, never neglecting a single night, till you have a leisure evening, and that will encourage them to be bold and come freely. Observe the night that you set your traps going, to lay food that they cannot carry away, and put but a little on the bridge, and on each side, that you may be sure of catching what comes to feed; and if in going round to your traps two or three times, you observe one of them that has not struck, strike it yourself; for sometimes they will not go down easily, if they stand long, but set hard, then the Rats will eat the food out,

and not strike the trap. Now as they are caught, go round and take them out with your small cage, and put them into the large one: in this manner I have caught seventy-two in one night's time, though sometimes in that trap where they have fed the best, I have not caught one Rat, according to expectation. If this should happen to you, be not in the least discouraged; for they will come again, and disappointment may have been occasioned by their having met with some other vermin in the way; for sometimes a weasel, stoat, or polecat, will go in and baulk your traps, as they leave a most horrible stench behind them, very disagreeable to the Rats, and in the course of my practice I have caught great numbers of the animals just before mentioned, but more particularly the polecat, all in the rat-traps; by which it is evident how naturally these vermin will follow one another, when prowling in the night after their prey; but these events, which now and then happen, ought not, in the least, to slacken your diligence; for by care and perseverance, and by following the above

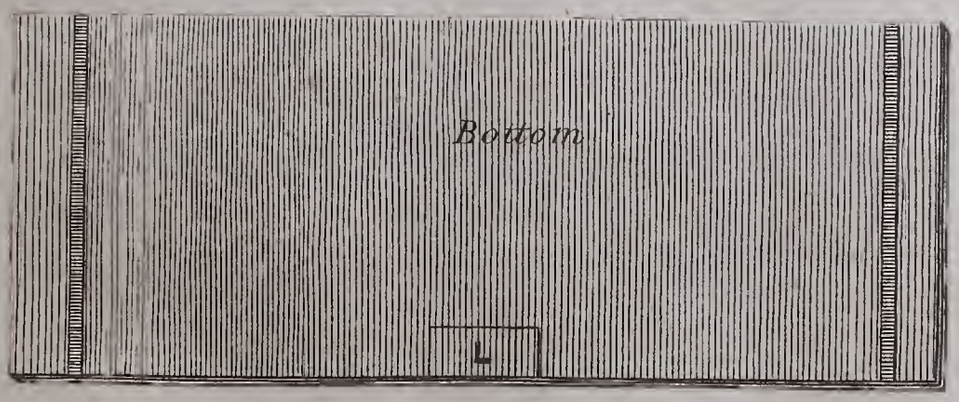
rules, you will soon take and destroy these terrible and subtle domestic enemies.

The following cautions are necessary in removing them from the trap to the cage: When you go round in order to survey your traps, and find one down, take the small wire cage, and put it close to the right hand end, which is the handiest method of taking them out, unless the trap stands in such a position that you cannot command that end. When you have placed the cage properly, pull that end of the trap up next your right hand, just high enough for the Rat to come out into the cage, let the candle stand down by the cage, which you must hold fast with your hand, that they may not drive it away; for sometimes when they see light, they will spring or bolt out with such velocity, that except you hold the cage tight, and close to the trap, they will drive it away, and so escape. At other times they are sulky, and will not come out if they can help it; in this case you must make a noise, and rattle against the other end of the trap; and they will soon

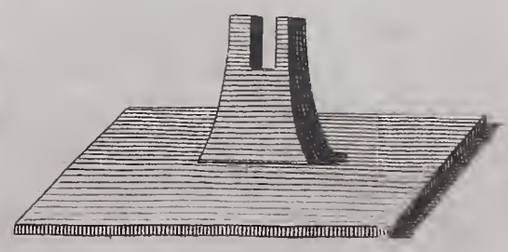
bolt out into the cage. Another piece of advice is here necessary, for when one Rat has come out you may possibly think there are no more in the trap, and take the cage away, but be certain of this first, for I have had seven at one time in the same trap. By observing this rule you will be enabled to guard against any of them getting away, after you have been at the trouble of taking them.

I shall now give the reader a very minute and exact description of the make and construction of the trap, made use of in the foregoing instances, which, with the print annexed, will give him a full, perfect, and adequate idea of the same; it is made in the following manner: Take three boards [pl. III.] two feet two inches long, let the two sides stand on the bottom, nine inches high, by nine inches wide in the clear; then take a thick bit of wood three inches wide, and put it in the top of the trap in the centre, for the upright centre E [pl. IV.] to go in; in the front of the trap, at the bottom, cut a hole for the trigger, half an inch wide, and three

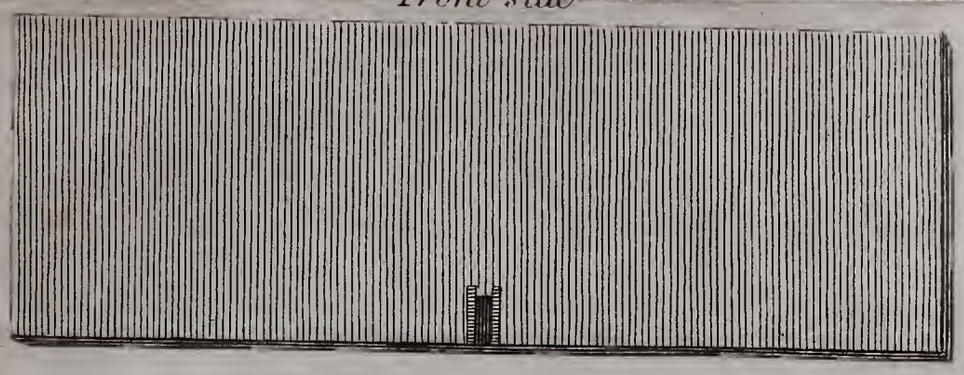
The SEPARATE PARTS of the RAT TRAP described.



Standard

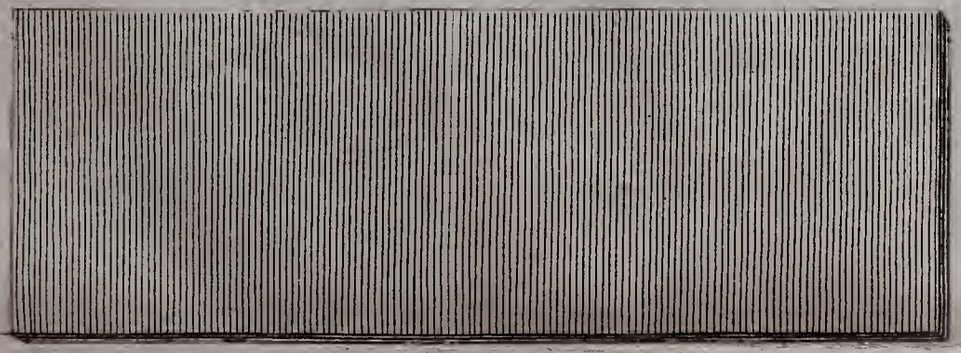


Front side

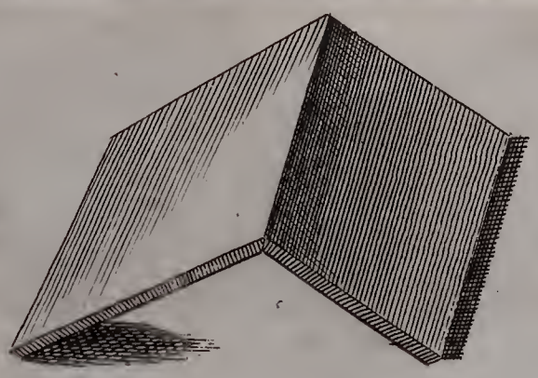


Bridge

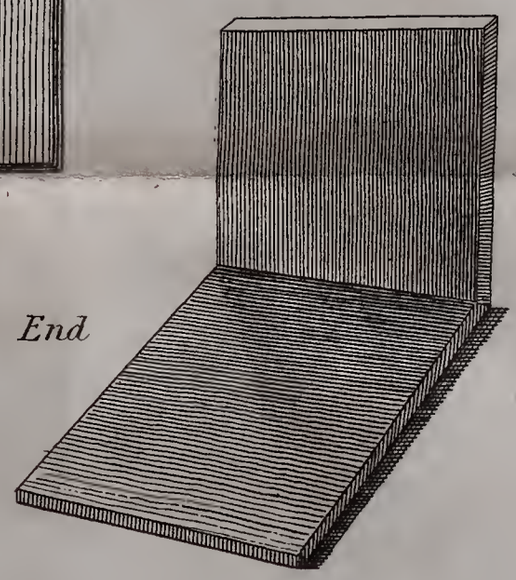
Back side



End



End



V. Woodthorpe sc. 29 Fetter Lane.

inches high, BB; line the inside of the hole with some pieces of tin about an inch wide, that they may not deface the inside of the trap, for a Rat will always gnaw and scratch wherever he sees any light; then take two pieces of board to go in even or level at each end, and under these take two short pieces, six inches high, to go in easy, nailing the top down to these at each end, and then hanging the top pieces F F within an inch of the end nearest the centre, they will go up and down together. In the centre, at the bottom of the trap, against the back, take a piece of wood, two inches long, and half an inch thick, make a hole in the centre of it, then put a nail through without a head, fasten it down to the bottom of the trap, and let the nail stand up half an inch, in order to hang the bridge on: then take a piece of half inch board five inches wide, and seven inches and a half long, make a hole at one end, in the centre, and at the other end put a strong bit of wire D, and let it come through the trigger-hole B B, bent

and turned up at the extremity, a quarter of an inch, that it may hitch or fasten to the trigger, and over the trigger-hole about half an inch, nail a little piece of wood C, about two inches long, in order to stop the tiller, to prevent its going into the trigger-hole; let your standard E, at the top of the trap, be five inches high, with a notch in the centre, opposite the trigger-hole; let it be half an inch wide, and two inches down; then you must put a small nail at each end, to both which tie a string and bring them through the notch in the standard and tie them both together; then cut one end off, and bringing the other end down, tie it to the trigger, which is the small piece of wood tied to the end of the string, in order to set the trap, which must be set up about six or seven inches high, at each end. The intent of having the under pieces but six inches high, is, that you may be enabled to take them out with the greater safety; for when you place the small wire cage at the end of the trap, then lift the end thereof level or even with the

small hole at the side of the cage, and there will be sufficient room for the Rat to go into the cage very easily.

Having described the trap, I now proceed to another particular, which is, that you must put it into a large box, in order to keep other animals from eating the food prepared for the Rat, and likewise to hinder the dogs from coming to it; for sometimes, when they find a trap where the Rats come to feed, they will lie by it and baulk the Rats. This box, therefore, is a safeguard or defence for them, for when any thing disturbs them, they will run in at the holes, at each end of the bottom of the box, to save themselves, and when the ends of the trap are sheltered, they will feed quietly; if therefore your dogs should come and disturb the traps, you must baulk them, and, during your absence, mind to lock the boxes, to keep any person from them, which has always been my constant practice.

The box [pl. IV. fig. 2.] is made in this

manner: three feet long, a foot and a half wide, and twenty inches high, with two small holes E, one at each end, at the back, close to the bottom of the box, about three inches diameter, or square, as you like; then the Rats can go in and out without being disturbed, and no other animal can take their food but themselves. Let the inside traps have a pound weight of sheet-lead nailed on at each end, which will make them strike quick, and keep the end down, for I have known them to get out of these traps for want of sufficient weight: and for the more effectually preventing them from getting their noses under the end and lifting them up, take a small piece of wood, an inch wide and three quarters of an inch thick, and put it across, at the bottom, in the inside, at each end, that the end of the trap may strike down flush withoutside. Let this piece of wood be lined with tin, that they may not gnaw it away. Let the traps be made of stout inch fir, which is the best wood you can make use of; for that will never warp nor bend, as other wood does;

but any old packing-box will do for the outside. If they are not exactly made as I have already prescribed, they will answer the intent, yet if you are obliged to make new ones, they may as well be made according to the directions before given; but if it is a quiet place where you can lock the door, or in a barn, or the outside of a barn at a farm-house, the following trap may be used with great advantage and efficacy, which is the common hutch or box trap, which however must be sheltered, at each end, as before directed. This trap the reader is referred to [plate II. fig. 1.] and likewise to the description of the same, in the account of the wild cat, in page 36 of this work. And here I beg leave to give a general caution to the reader, which is, to follow the directions laid down in the preceding pages, and practise them by himself; for company will baulk the sport, and when once the traps are baulked, the blame will fall upon the author, who is not in the least in fault; for he will maintain and abide by every instruction before given, to be exactly just and true. Re-

member, likewise, that they are a very subtle vermin, for if they in the least suspect what you are about, you cannot catch them, for I would not have you imagine that any kind of vermin will ever enter a trap, knowing it to be one; on the contrary, you must entice and encourage them by the means before laid down, which will make them bold, and enable you to catch them with the greatest facility imaginable. Now when you have set all your traps to work, you will want to scent them, which must be performed in this manner: Take twenty drops of the oil of rhodium, six or seven grains of musk, half an ounce of the oil of aniseed, put them in a small phial for use, and before you set the traps, shake them well together, then scent your traps as follows: Take a small piece of paper twisted up, dip it in the bottle, and rub each end of the trap, and put two or three drops on the bridge, and likewise the holes at each end of the box; leave the paper in each trap, and let every trap be served in this manner; the reason of mixing these three ingredients together is, that I have always

tried it with success, for in some places the Rats love the smell of rhodium, in others they like the smell of musk, and again, in other places, they love the smell of aniseed; on this account I mix them all together, that the scent of either one or other of the above ingredients may entice and allure them to the trap. Another piece of instruction is necessary to be given: when you first set your traps to work, different means are to be used according to the different places you are catching at; if it is at a dog-kennel, put some small pieces of boiled flesh about in the trap, as well as the feed; if in a slaughter-house, put some small bits of fat, or small pieces of guts; if in a brewhouse, put some malt; if in a still-house, put some of the meal; if in a mill, the same; if at a barn, put in some corn as well as the feed, and so likewise in all other instances. The reason of this method of proceeding is, in whatever places your traps are set, put some of the same things in the trap as they have been before used to; for then they have not so great a notion of its being a trap: you must

not use any of the scenting in the feed, for there is nothing they are so fond of in their food as the oil of caraways.

The Recipe how to make the Food or Feed.

Take a pound of good flour, three ounces of treacle, and six drops of the oil of caraways, put them all into a bowl, and rub them well together, till it looks all alike; be sure to mix it well; then put a pound of the crumb of bread to it; for they like the bread mixt with their feed better than the feed alone, it being too luscious, for which reason they do not like it so well by itself, but that night on which you catch, put no bread to it, lest they should carry it away.

There is a necessity for your having two wire cages, one small, [pl. II. fig. 2.] used in going round your traps, in order to take the vermin out to put them into the larger one, made in the manner following:

The small wire cage must be thus con-

structed: Let it be nine inches in length by nine wide, four inches and a half high, with a fall in it at one end and a door at the other, the first to let them in at, and the other to let them out into the great cage, which must be made as follows: Let it be twenty inches long, nine inches wide, and eight inches high, with a fall at one end, to let them in from the small cage, and a door on the top to take them out at; now when you are catching, set your great cage out of the way, at some distance, that the other Rats may not hear them squeak, for that will baulk your sport and occasion them to run away. In the morning, if you do not choose to drown them, perhaps you will want to hunt those you have taken, and know not how to take them out at the top of the great cage; but this may be done very easily; for if you do not hurt them they will not bite you; for by standing together in the trap all night they are cowed, and have not the least notion of biting, unless you should happen to squeeze them too hard; but you may take them out one by one, with your hand, very safely.

Now this matter is a secret, for we always inculcate the notion that they will bite you terribly, unless you rub your hands with some kind of ingredient or other. I was once of that opinion myself, but am now better convinced; indeed when there are but four or five left behind in the trap, they are apt to be very violent and outrageous, you may then shake them out to your dog. There is a wide difference in the temper and disposition of these animals; for some are so savage and untamed, that they will set up their backs, looking very fiercely and crying out, if you do but look at them; but when you meet with one of this kind, shake him well in the cage, together with the rest, and observe when he has put his head among the others, and take him out by his tail and he will not bite you; but observe when you have first catched them, do not go to handle them directly, for then they are so mad and furious that they will bite any thing.

I shall here give the reader another maxim I have often followed very successfully: If

you find the holes quiet and no Rats to use them, it will then be incumbent on you to stop them up in this manner, to prevent others from entering therein: Take a pint of common tar, half an ounce of pearl-ashes, an ounce of oil of vitriol, and a good handful of common salt, mix them all well together in any old deep pan; get some pieces of paper, and put some of the above mixture very thick on the paper, and place enough of this into the holes to stop them, and then let the bricklayer make good after you; and if you should find any of the holes opened again, it is certain you had not put in a sufficient quantity, then put in some more, and, if it is done as it ought, they will never approach there any more, while either smell or taste remains in it; now by stopping the holes in the shores in town, where they come up, with the above mixture, I have kept a gentleman's house entirely clear, and never have caught one single Rat.

Now sometimes they will get in behind the wainscot and in the ceiling, in town, and

not come out into the house, but remain there, and become very troublesome, and this is a very bad case: in order therefore to make them forsake these places, find out a small hole or crack, then take a handful of common salt, and put it in at the hole or crack, and pour upon the salt a spoonful or two of oil of vitriol, and this will make such a fumigation or smoke, that they cannot bear it, then stop the hole or crevice again, that the smoke may not come out, do this in two or three places, as near where you hear them as you can, and it will cause them to forsake those places. This method is very safe, as no damage can possibly ensue to the wainscot from the smoke.

I shall now point out a method to kill them, where you cannot set a trap for them: Take a quart of the same food, before made use of in taking them in traps, then rasp three figs of nux vomica, add to these a quarter of a pound of crumb of bread, mix them all well together, and this will be their certain bane; but first give them some with-

The RAT TRAP set

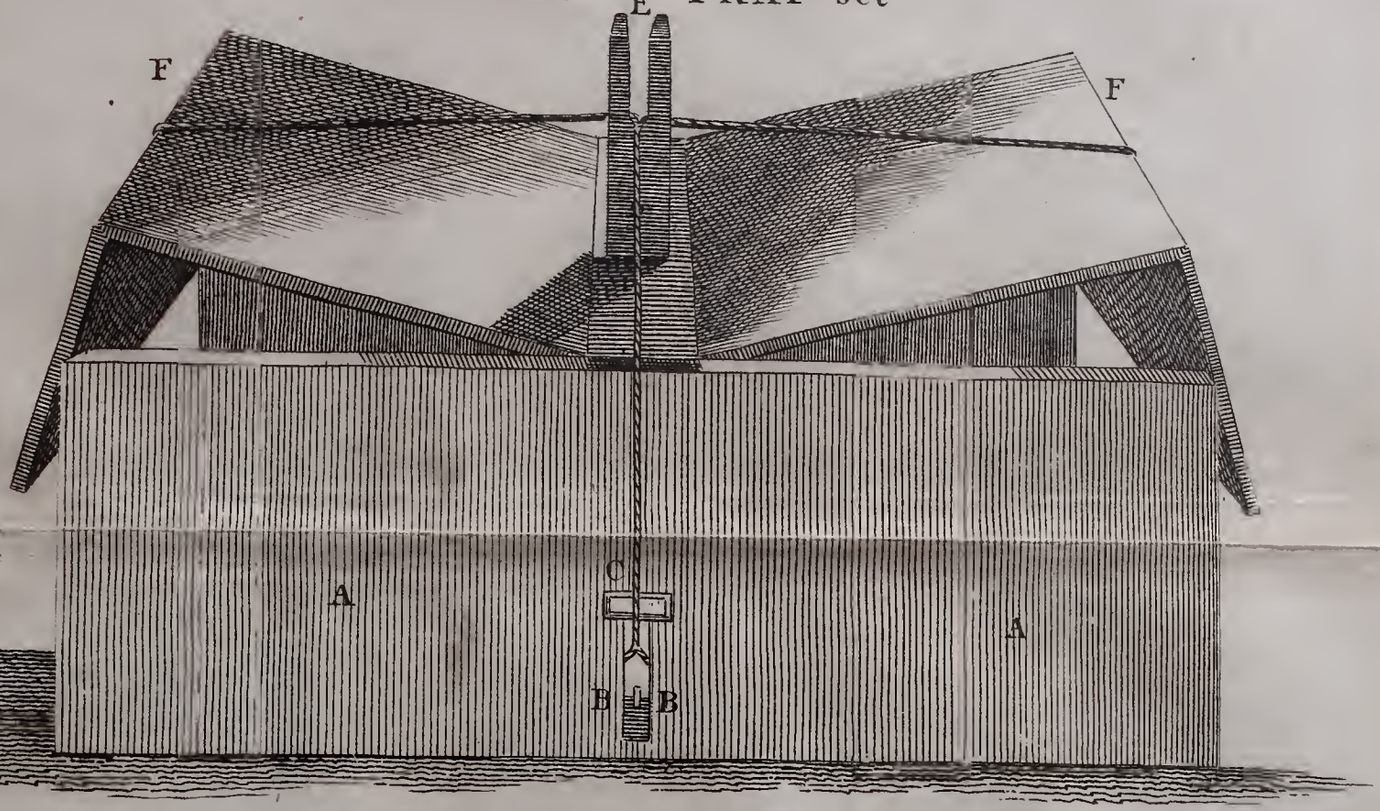


Fig. 1.

The BOX wherein the RAT TRAP is placed

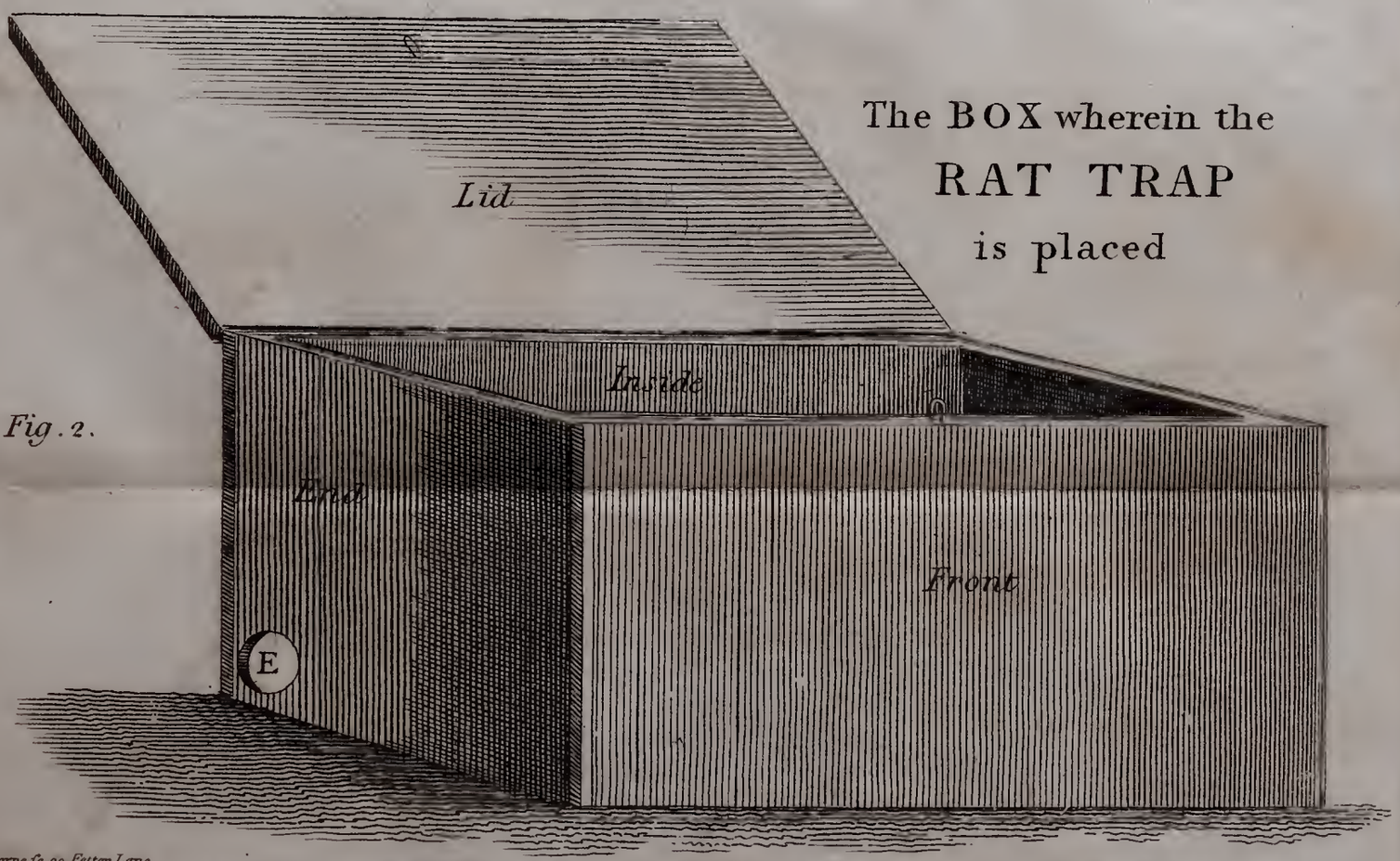


Fig. 2.

V. Woodthorpe fc 29 Fetter Lane

out the nux vomica figs, for two or three succeeding nights, and when they find it agrees with them, they will eat that mixed with the fig, with great freedom and greediness.

I am not much a friend to poisoning Rats in houses, except in cases of necessity, but if it must be done, I would by no means recommend the use of arsenic, or corrosive sublimate, which is too often practised, for then they creep into holes about the house, get between the ceilings, and other places, and there die, and occasion a very disagreeable smell; for as soon as they have taken enough of it, it is like a spark of fire in their bowels, and brings on an insatiate thirst, and they are restless and uneasy till they get at something to drink, either water, milk, or beer, and then they die immediately; from this circumtance it is evident what dangerous consequences may arise, if any person should drink any of the milk or beer, where these vermin, thus poisoned, have been slavering and drinking; but sometimes it is a difficult matter to

make them swallow enough to kill them, for the moment they taste the sharp acid contained therein, it corrodes the mouth and loosens the teeth, and then they will eat no more of it, whereas the mixture of the nux vomica, before recommended, is quite different, and if even tasted by any person, no such fatal effects can happen, for there is nothing but a little bitter that is disagreeable; and they will take a sufficient quantity to kill them before they know it, and then they cannot get rid of it, for it throws them into fits, puts them to the greatest agony, and they die soon after; and in order to be more certain of its effects, I have kept them in a cage, and gave it them to try the experiment.

I conclude my account of the Rat with the few following particulars, which I flatter myself will prove useful. They are often very troublesome in coming up the shores, more especially in still-houses and brew-houses; now in the above instances, or in any other shores, where you cannot conveniently set a trap, I have practised the subsequent scheme

with great success, which, although it does not destroy them, will infallibly drive them away: When you have catched some Rats and killed them, take some white arsenic, finely powdered, put it into an old pepper-box, and shake a quantity of it on the fore parts of the dead Rats, and put them down the holes or avenues by the sides of the shores, where they come in at, which will put a stop to their coming any farther; for when they once perceive the arsenic, they will retire immediately, whereas if you was to put them down without the arsenic, the living Rats would eat the dead ones; I have seen one Rat kill another, when put into the large cage, and afterwards eat him; and once had an old she Rat, big with young, which she brought forth in the cage, and immediately eat them; for there is no kind of vermin whatever so savage as a Norway Rat; again, when you find they have taken to a rick of any sort of corn or hay, take some dead Rats, put some arsenic over them, as before observed, then place one in each hole they have made in the thatch, and it will

make them all forsake the rick; in like manner you may stop some of these Rats, served as before, under the barn-floor, where the Rats use, and it will prevent others from taking shelter or harbouring under them; these vermin are likewise very fond of lying under the calf-pens, where they keep snug and warm; use the above method and it will drive them away; and also in any of their burrows, if you can put the dead Rats, prepared as above, so safe that nothing can easily get at them, and by observing these rules, you will obtain the desired effect.

THE BLACK RAT.

This animal is the old genuine English House-Rat, no other being known in and about houses, for many ages, in this country, and differs in many particulars from the Norway Rat, last described, for they do not burrow and run into shores as the others do, but chiefly lie in the ceilings and wainscots in houses, and in out-houses they lie under the ridge-tiles and behind the rafters, and run along the side-plates; but their numbers are greatly diminished to what they were formerly, not many of them being now left, for the Norway Rats always drive them out, and kill them wherever they can come at them; as a proof of which I was once exercising my employment at a gentleman's house, and when the night came that I appointed to catch, I set all my traps going as

usual, and in the lower part of the house, in the cellars, I caught the Norway Rats, but in the upper part of the house I took nothing but the black Rats; I then put them together into the great cage, to keep them alive till the morning, that the gentleman might see them, when the Norway Rats killed the black ones immediately, and devoured them in my presence.

These vermin are not near so bold, nor will feed so freely as the Norway Rat, and when you are troubled with any of them you must observe where they use, which you may do very easily, for if you go into any place and look up at the side-plates, you will perceive they will be quite black where they run along them, and likewise along the cross beams; on these cross beams place one of the traps you set for the Norway Rats, and put some of the same feed in them, but mix more bread in it than you did for the Norway Rat, and scent the trap in the same manner, and put some corn in of any sort: set a trap at each place where they use, and

set them all to feed, as you do the others for the Norway Rat; and when you perceive that they come to feed boldly, then take them; but this must be done in the night, for they do not move by day-light, as the other Rats will. By this method I catch them alive, but I have likewise taken them on the side-plates and beams, where they run, in wires and in snares, so that they swing off the beams; they are not near so savage as the Norway Rats, for they seldom kill any chickens or any thing of that kind, unless extremely hungry and sharp-set indeed, but they are sly thieves for cheese, bacon, or any kind of eatables they can get at and pilfer.

THE WATER RAT.

These Rats lie always by the water-side, and feed chiefly on grass and vegetables, eating neither flesh nor corn, but they will devour green peas, when in season, if there are any growing near the ditches where they lie; these vermin do not much mischief, except in making holes in banks and spoiling fences; they make kennels or holes by the side of ditches, very much resembling those of the otter, for they have one way out in the water, and another way out by land, in order to escape from their enemies, whichever way pursued. The method of taking them is by setting little hutch traps by the side of the ditch or pond where they lie, with wings made with bushes or raised with mould, running aslant from the trap as a guide for them to go in, such as they have in

warrens. Feed them with any thing green, such as the hard part or stalk cut out of a cabbage, or cabbage-leaves, which they will eat; but do not set your traps going till they feed boldly, and give them some leaves regularly, as you do the other Rats their proper feed; tie some of these leaves in the trap, then you will be a judge of what comes to feed, else one will convey away as much as ten will eat, which occasions you to conclude there are a great many of them. You may take them another way; get some small steel traps and put them in their runs, even with the surface of the ground, and covered over very nicely with the mould. These vermin are something like the Norway Rat, but smaller, their noses and tails are shorter, and their heads rounder, or what is commonly termed muff-headed.

THE SQUIRREL.

THESE little animals are admired for their beauty, and for the sport they afford in hunting them among the trees; they are about the size of the stoat or cain, with a tail as large as their body, which they always turn up when they sit still, to keep their bodies warm; they are of a reddish colour, except under the belly, which is white; they make themselves nests or lodging-places, commonly called drays, in a very neat manner, with small sticks, leaves, and moss, in the tops of the trees, where they hoard up nuts to serve them in the winter; but besides these, they make a reserve of nuts, acorns, and other things of a similar nature, in retired and bye places, which they know where to find, in case the other should be taken away, which often happens; they are chiefly hurt-

ful in destroying wall-fruit, for they will run along the top of the wall, taking the first choice of the fruit, whether nectarines, peaches, apricots, &c. and do prodigious mischief; I have caught them on the wall with a small steel trap, covered nicely, and in wood-walks I have seen them take the eggs out of bird's-nests and break them, by that means destroying their nests. Their flesh is reckoned a great dainty by some persons, and is said to be superior to venison in flavour.

THE MOLE.

This animal is in some places, but chiefly in the North of England, called a Want, and, contrary to most other vermin, lives chiefly under ground; its skin is of a fine black jet colour, very smooth and soft, and has short legs, with which they, with incredible swiftness, will dig themselves into the earth when they apprehend any danger; they are supposed by some people to be entirely blind, it being in many places proverbial to say *as blind as a mole*, but this is a mistake, for they have eyes as well as other vermin, but very small, appearing scarcely larger than the head of a common pin, but sufficient to serve their purposes, their residence being, as was before observed, generally under the earth.

These animals do great mischief in gardens and grounds, and if you find they come, observe the outsides, for their angle, or run; or, if there is a path in a field, it is very probable but they have a run across the path, or at a gate-way, they will frequently have one; these are what we call the main runs, and about two or three inches under the earth, and may very easily be found by the heaving up of the mould or earth, along which they will run ten times in a day. When you have discovered one of these runs, you must tread in the earth tight, and when you come that way again, see whether it is as you left it, and if you perceive the Mole has been along, then set a trap, by which means I have caught several of them in an afternoon; these being their main roads out of one part of the ground to the other, for it will be of little signification to set a trap in any other angles or runs, and if you should, it may possibly remain a great while before a Mole comes; for in the spring, when they run near the surface of the earth, they make a great many different

angles in search of the worms, on which and chaffers their chief food consists.

Now if they make hills in your fields or gardens, take notice of the places before-mentioned, and set a trap in the following manner: Take a piece of board half an inch thick, four inches and a half long, by two and a half wide, then put a small hoop or bow at each end, with just room for the Mole to go through; then in the centre, at each side, put two small pegs, in order to keep them in the trap; for sometimes one that is shy, when he finds the peg before him that springs the trap, will turn out at the side and spring the trap, and not be taken: it is necessary therefore to use these small pegs, which will keep them in the straight road, placed as before directed. In the next place, get two strong horse-hairs, or pieces of small wire, then in the centre or middle of the bow, at each end, make a hole to put the hair or wire through double, then open the hair or wire just to fit, and lie close inside of the bow, like a noose, get some fine

rub her back-part about the bows and the inside of the trap, by which method I have caught eight he Moles successively; observe, when you have caught all that you perceive to move, you need only look round the outside of your fields, and keep some traps constantly going there, and they will lay hold of them as they come in and out; another expedient you may make use of, by putting some dead Moles in the runs where they come, which will prevent their coming, and keep your ground quiet and free from these troublesome vermin.

THE HOUSE-MOUSE.

THESE are nasty little vermin, well known, and are very nauseous, for wherever they come, whether in the pantry or larder, you may easily discover it by the disagreeable smell they leave behind them. They are very troublesome in dairies, where they will skim the milk, and will get into bird-cages after the seed, and kill the birds; and are mischievous in other instances, of which no mention needs here to be made. Many persons would doubtless be glad to be informed of a method to kill these vermin, which is done very easily; and to accomplish it nothing is so good as nux vomica. Take a quart of the feed above prescribed for the rat, before there is any bread mixed with it, then take four figs of nux vomica, and rasp them very fine, or else they will pick

the feed from it, upon account of the bitter taste; rub it well together, and it will be their certain bane. My method of laying it is after this manner; if they come into the larder at night, put the bread into a pan, and take the other eatables out of the way; then lay some of the feed on a piece of paper, and do this in two or three other places, which will not be attended with any danger: however, for fear of any accident, what is not eaten take away in the morning, and at night lay it down again, and so keep on as long as any come; in the dairy do the same, or in any other place where they appear; I have found several lay dead on the paper at one time, but remember always to lay the ingredients on paper, then you may take away what is left.

THE FIELD-MOUSE.

This is a larger Mouse than the former, being the largest of the Mouse kind, with a reddish back and a good deal of white under the belly. They abound in gardens, and frequently swarm in prodigious numbers in the fields: they will eat either corn or flesh, just as it comes in their way. I have seen five or six of them by moon-light attack a large toad and kill it, which they do often; and when I have been trailing for a fox in the night, I have observed, by turning the light round, several of these Field-Mice following the trail. They are more difficult to destroy than the house-mice, on account that they are shy in taking any bait; however, sometimes, when I have been going to catch a fox, I have been sometimes obliged to put some of the feed (so often before

mentioned) in the shrape, in order to kill the Mice, before I could get any to lie for the fox. In winter they will likewise come into houses at the sink-holes, and get into the pantries, larders, and dairies, being driven from the fields by extremity of hunger, and prove very troublesome and pernicious; and in spring they will get into the gardens, and eat whole rows or drills of peas, after they are set: I can give no better method to destroy these vermin, than to lay some of the above feed for them, as you do for the other, on a tile, and shelter it with some pieces of old boards that it may not get wet: lay it out at night and take it in again in the morning, and all that eat of it will certainly die.

THE

RED SHREW-MOUSE.

This species of the Mouse kind has a nose like a mole, and is in general a very harmless, inoffensive little animal, in regard to its preying on any thing: it is much smaller than the house-mouse. The chief mischief done by these vermin is, that in harvest-time they will come home with the corn, remain there and breed. I have known great numbers taken out of a rick; and I once remember half a bushel of these and other Mice caught at one time out of a rick or stand, which is often owing to the farmer's own negligence and inattention; for you may often see a rick-stand made a nursery, occasioned by putting under it harrows, ploughs, hurdles, and props: what avails it then to have a stand to fill the ricks in this

manner, and assist the vermin up? You cannot indeed prevent their coming home with the corn, or when rats hop up and down the stand, which they do very easily: the best method, therefore, would be to nail some tin to the props, which would keep the Mice from getting up them; and when once you find they have got to a corn-rick, the best way is to take it in as soon as you can, for these Mice, in one particular, are worse than the rats among the corn, and do a great deal more mischief; for this reason, that they will live a great while without water, only by licking the ends of the straws, while any moisture remains therein, and all the while they remain in the ricks they do infinite prejudice. If it is not convenient to remove the rick, observe the following method: Take a quarter of a pound of the best nux vomica, put it into an old saucepan, with three quarts of water, boil it till it comes to two quarts, and put two pounds of treacle to it, in order to overcome the bitter taste of the nux vomica; then take some small earthen pans, into which pour some of this mixture,

and set the pans in different places under the eaves of the ricks; the Mice being in want of water, will greedily drink of the mixture, which will kill them; and this method you must continue till they are destroyed.

Before I conclude this account, I cannot help taking notice of a gross blunder, which a certain writer has made in his description of this little vermin, who asserts that it is as large as a rat, of the colour of a weasel, and very mischievous to cattle, and that it will get upon a beast's back, and make it lame in the chine; and in consequence of the bite, the beast will swell to the heart and die; all which particulars are entirely erroneous; for its size is less than that of the common house-mouse, its colour like the squirrel; and as to the miraculous affair of its killing any beast or cattle, it is of a piece with the rest. On the contrary, I am convinced from long observation, that it feeds on roots, vegetables, and corn, and will not touch flesh on any account.

THE

BLACK SHREW-MOUSE.

This animal has a nose like a mole, and much resembles the red shrew-mouse, last described, except in colour; they are very harmless little creatures, for they seldom come to barns or ricks, their residence being amongst the grass, by the sides of ditches which they feed on. You may often hear them as you are walking along, squeaking by the path's side, and making a noise something like the grasshopper; but they do not the least mischief that I know of; I thought proper however to mention them, that the reader might know that such a little animal really exists.

THE GRASS-MOUSE.

This Mouse is rather larger than the common mouse, with a muff-head like a water-rat, and a short club tail, looking as if the top was cut off, and has a great deal of the nature and disposition of that animal, for it eats no corn at all, but lives on grass and vegetables; being of a very harmless nature, it is a prey to other vermin, as the water-rat is, such as stoats and weasels, which are the worst enemies it has.

THE DORMOUSE.

This is a small red Mouse, with a tail like a squirrel, and is the most harmless and inoffensive of all the mouse-tribe. It is a very beautiful tame little animal, and is kept by many persons in small boxes or cages, and fed with crumbs of bread, &c. They have one singular and peculiar quality, which is that of sleeping for several weeks together, without receiving the least sustenance, and appearing all the while as if dead. You may oftentimes find them in dry banks, or in wood, laid up very warm in a nest, in the ground, made with oak-leaves, and always asleep when you discover them.

THE BAT.

This little animal is half mouse, half bird, having wings something resembling leather, and a head very much like that of the mouse, except that their nose is flatter, and their mouth wider; they keep close in holes all the day, and never fly abroad till the evening, and that in the summer-time, for which reason they are called in many places, the winged mouse; they live chiefly on flies and other small insects, and dwell in holes under the roofs of houses, churches, barns, old ruinated buildings, and in the holes of hollow trees, where in winter time I have sometimes found several scores of them closely adhering together, in large clusters, and in a torpid state, in which condition they doubtless remain till vivified again by the enlivening warmth of the sun, on the ap-

proach of the summer. I have been the more particular in my account and description of the different kinds of Mice, as perhaps many of my readers might be unacquainted, that there are so many distinct species of the mouse kind.

THE

LARGE BLACK EAGLE

BUZZARD.

HAVING finished my account of the four-footed vermin, I now come to describe the winged tribe of vermin, inhabitants of the air, which, notwithstanding, often descend to earth, and do much mischief; I shall begin with the Black Eagle-Buzzard, which is one of the largest and fiercest birds of the hawk-kind, that breeds in England.

This bird frequents parks and warrens, and often catches leverets, young rabbits and pheasants, or any thing else that moves, as soon as the morning light approaches, for they are a very early bird; in winter-time I have caught them in a steel trap, the same

as is set in a cube for a dog; bait it with the guts of rabbits or fowls, or some pieces of rabbits that you find dead by accident; in spring I have caught them in steel traps, with the skin of a young rabbit stuffed and tied to the bridge, but after the young rabbits begin to be able to run about, they sometimes are shy and will not strike at a rabbit, unless they see him run, the steel traps that you set for this vermin should strike seven or eight inches high, in order to clear the bait as it ought to be, otherwise the jaws might only catch the bait, and miss the vermin. I have sometimes caught them with a rat in the following manner: Set two traps in the manner as you see in plate VI. fig. 1. head to head, covered very nicely with moss, then round the circle as in the same plate, put some small pieces of fern, or a bush or two, quite low, that the bait may be visible and open; put the bait, whatever it may be, in the middle, between the two traps, then he must of necessity go over one of them, in order to get the bait, and by this means I have often caught him. Sometimes you

may observe him to haunt a place in a warren or park for a week or fortnight together, then set your traps in the same method as before laid down, and you will be almost certain of taking him. Let your bait be a dead rat, if you can procure one.

THE

GREY BOB-TAILED BUZZARD,

OR

PUTTOCK.

This bird is much of the same nature as the former, in hunting-parks and warrens, for the destruction of rabbits and pheasants, going in search of them when the morning-light appears. In this respect, however, it differs from the Eagle Buzzard, that it is smaller. You may catch them with the steel trap above described, baited with the entrails of fowls or rabbits, or with some of the pieces of rabbits which may have been accidentally killed. They are to be caught easiest in winter-time, for then I have known them

haunt one place for a month together, in a warren, where you may easily catch them, as at that season they are short and destitute of food.

THE

LARGE FORKED TAIL

KITE.

This is the largest and heaviest bird of the hawk-kind in England, but not near so fierce as the Eagle-buzzard, being rather of a sluggish and indolent disposition, not caring much to hunt after prey; but when the other kites and hawks have killed any birds, they come upon them, and beat them away, and then devour the birds themselves; they chiefly dwell in woods and desert places, and frequent the sides of rivers and brooks, being fond of fish, and often eat the tails of the fish, which the otters have left behind them. You may catch them by setting two traps, in the same manner as you do for the

buzzard; bait them with a piece of fish, if you have it, or with a rat, or the guts of fowls or rabbits, and when once you discover the places they haunt, you may catch them with the greatest facility.

THE

LARGE BLUE SHERARD KITE.

This kind of Kite frequents forests, heaths, and other lonesome places, but especially bogs and marshy grounds, where they destroy great numbers of snipes, to which they are the worst enemy of any bird of prey of the hawk-kind; they beat all over the bog with the greatest regularity and exactness, till they find them lying: for the nature of the snipe is, if they perceive their enemy in the pursuit, they lie as close to the ground as possible, when the Kite pounces upon them directly and takes them. I have observed one of these vermin beating at one end of a bog or marshy piece of ground; and at the

other end I have stooped down till he has come up close to the place where I was, he looking stedfastly down for his prey, regardless of any thing else; and when he came near enough I have shot him; sometimes they will have a beat cross a warren, where I have caught them in traps, baited with what is termed a stall, which is a young rabbit-skin stuffed.

These vermin are very remarkable for one particular circumstance, for at any time when you observe any of them come along in the morning, you will be certain of seeing them return the same way back again in the afternoon, and three or four succeeding mornings they will have the same beat, if they are not frightened or disturbed; whenever, therefore, you see one go along in the morning, get a trap set ready against his return, baited with a rabbit's skin stuffed and put on the bridge of the trap, as before directed, but remember to cover the trap nicely with moss; if you set it in a green sward, then cover it with grass, and in this manner

I have often taken them; I have likewise caught them by means of two steel traps, set in the same manner as for the buzzard; but always mind when you set traps in this manner, to fasten down the bait between them with a peg, otherwise they will frequently take it away, and not strike the trap; but when the bait is fixed they cannot get it away, but are constrained to stop, when by hopping and picking about, they spring the trap and are caught.

THE

BLUE SHERARD

HAWK.

This bird, in many respects, resembles the blue kite last described, in haunting heaths, forests, and lonely places; especially quags and marshy grounds, doing much mischief, particularly among the snipes. You will always be sure of seeing him return home by the same path, in the afternoon, by which he pursued his flight in the morning, but he is not so large, and preys in much the same manner, but does not, however, frequent warrens so often as the other; you may catch them by the same method as the Sher-

ard Kite, with a rabbit's skin stuffed and put on the bridge of the trap, remembering to cover the trap nicely with moss or grass, observing the directions before given.

THE LARGE

BROWN, WHITE ARSE, RING-TAILED

HAWK,

Is the most pernicious and mischievous Hawk that flies; but especially in destroying that admired game the partridge, which it takes, not so much by swift flying, as by the following manner or stratagem: viz. when they find a covey and spring them, they fly after them as fast as they are able, and mark where they pitch down again, and then spring them again; and thus keep following them till they catch their prey; for partridges, when they are driven hard for three flights, become so tired and languid that they are easily taken; I have sometimes

observed one of these Hawks in full pursuit after a poor partridge, almost spent, when the Hawk has suddenly stopped, and alighted on a tree in the next hedge, to which I imagined the partridge had taken, as they frequently do, when they are almost tired or down. On this I got near enough the Hawk, being intent and earnest after his prey, shot him dead, and on examining, to my great surprise, found that the partridge, being driven by the Hawk, had taken refuge in a hutch-trap, that stood on the other side of the hedge, where the Hawk had marked it, and sat watching for its coming out again; these vermin will keep their walk or beat for some time very regularly. I have caught them in a trap, baited with a rabbit-skin stuffed, as before observed.

THE

SMALL RING-TAILED

HAWK,

Is the largest of the Sparrow-Hawk kind, and is a very fierce and pernicious bird, destroying young ducks and chickens, in yards, &c. about farm-houses. In the fields, they kill black-birds, thrushes, and in the winter-season fieldfares and other small birds. I have driven one from a blackbird, and immediately set down a steel trap, covered quite smoothly, placing the same bird on the bridge of the trap, and have taken the Hawk, which returned soon after for its prey. They will likewise frequently come to the chicken gardens and pheasantries, when you must set a

steel trap, baited with a dead chicken or any other of the birds before-mentioned; which they delight to feed on, and in all probability you will lay hold of them, and if you find they have been made shy, by reason of the trap striking and not catching them, which will sometimes, though very rarely, happen, you may destroy them after the following manner: take a live chicken, tie it to a small stake drove in the ground, by one of its legs, laying some bread or corn for it to feed on; then get out of sight, with your gun, and the hawk will come and strike at the chicken, when you may easily shoot him, and this method I have often practised with good success.

THE

SMALL SPARROW

HAWK.

Birds which fly wild in the fields, are the chief prey of this little Hawk. It very seldom destroys chickens, or any other kind of poultry, unless driven by the greatest extremity of hunger; I have driven them from a bird, and caught them in a steel trap as I have the others, having been allowed so much per head for all the winged vermin, as well as others that I destroyed, which made me very anxious and assiduous in trying and inventing various methods to destroy them.

THE

SMALL BLACK-HEADED SPARROW-HAWK.

I NEVER caught this Hawk in a trap, but have shot several of them; it is a very beautiful bird, and has a black head, with pointed wings, and is very quick and sharp after its prey, which are small birds of every kind. It is more timid than the last-mentioned Hawk, and is seldom seen, there being but few of them in England. On which account we need not dwell minutely upon him.

THE

WIND-HOVER

HAWK.

You may often see this little brown Hawk, the smallest of the species, hovering in the air, then they steadily look down on the ground, and if they chance to see a mouse, they will dart with incredible swiftness, like an arrow out of a bow, and catch it; sometimes they will catch a mole, and I have frequently taken this kind of Hawk in a steel trap, by laying one of these animals on the bridge; and with this I conclude my account of the birds of the Hawk kind. The three last-mentioned indeed do not much damage or mischief, but if I had not mentioned them

the catalogue would have been incomplete; besides, I flatter myself it will be acceptable to my readers, some of whom might, possibly, not be acquainted that there were so many different kinds of Hawks which breed in England.

THE

BROWN WOOD-OWL.

Few persons perhaps imagine this to be a pernicious animal, yet in my opinion, it is the very worst winged vermin that exists; they seize their prey with great fierceness, and break it up exactly as the cat does, by beginning at the fore part. It is very happy for the farmer, and others who keep poultry, that the ducks and chickens are gone to roost before the Owl comes to prey in the night, otherwise there would be few, if any of them left; however, I now proceed to make good my assertion, and describe the infinite mischief done by this sort of Owls. When the evening approaches, many animals, such as leverets, young rabbits, young pheasants, young partridges, who had lain

quiet in the day-time, come out to feed in the stillness and silence of the evening, when there is nothing else to disturb them: the Owl then comes, when they are exposed, and takes away what he pleases, and if they happen to have young ones at the same time, it is impossible to conceive what numbers will be taken away in a night's time to satisfy his voracious appetite; and this I can affirm from my own observation, as I used to make it my frequent practice to go out and hunt the Owls all round the outsides of the warren. The method was this: Two of us used to go with a gun, one on one side of the hedge, and the other on the other side; a third person accompanying us with a long pole or stick, who therewith beat the hollow and ivy trees, when the Owls would fly out, and we have shot sometimes a dozen in a morning. But one morning particularly I found an Owl's nest, and shot the hen; and, on examining the nest, I found two young ones, with several pieces of young rabbits, leverets, &c. therein, but we could not meet with the old cock; on which I took out one

of the young ones, leaving the other in order to entice him home to the nest again; the next morning I repaired to the place, when he flew out, and I shot him dead, and took away the other young one which had been left behind. But, what is remarkable, the old Owl had carried no less than three young rabbits to the single one remaining, in one night's time, which is an evident proof what havoc they make among the game. Another particular of these vermin deserves mentioning, which is, that they seldom eat more than the fore quarters of any animal they kill, as the cat does, and always leave the hind quarters untouched, which are found in the nest. I have likewise caught them in moon-light evenings in steel traps, baited with a rabbit's skin stuffed, and have often killed many of them with a gun, by keeping close under the hedge, and imitating the squeaking of a mouse, when the Owl has come directly to the place, and I have shot him dead on the spot.

THE LIGHT-COLOURED BARN,

OR,

SCREECH OWL.

This kind of Owl is a very beautiful bird, of a palish brown colour, a little spotted and white on the breast, doing more good than harm, for it seldom preys on any thing but mice, which it will watch for in the barns like a cat, and destroy great numbers of that little vermin. On this account these Owls are encouraged by the farmers. If you should see one of them, mimick the squeaking of the mouse, and he will come to you directly, and you may easily shoot him, as was before observed of the Wood Owl.

THE

HORNED OWL

Has its name from the feathers which stand up on each side of his head, resembling two horns, and making a very beautiful appearance. There are many people, who do not believe there are any Owls of this species bred amongst us; the large brown Horned Owl (which is bigger than our largest birds of prey, whether kite or buzzard) is indeed from foreign parts, and is esteemed a very great curiosity, but never breeds here, which this little Horned Owl does, and much resembles the large one, only in miniature. I have shot several of them on Windsor forest: they do no mischief that I could ever learn, however I thought it proper to mention them, that the reader may be assured there is such a bird existing.

THE FERN OWL,

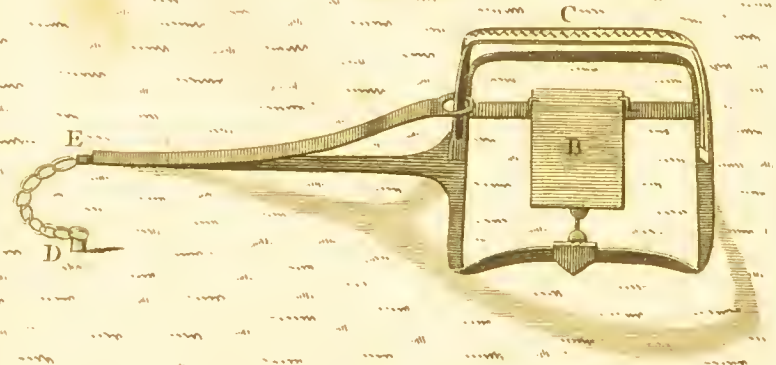
OR

NIGHT JAR.

This is a very harmless bird, about the size of the small Sparrow Hawk, of a dark colour, and with a large mouth. They never go out till the evening, and then catch beetles and other insects for their sustenance.

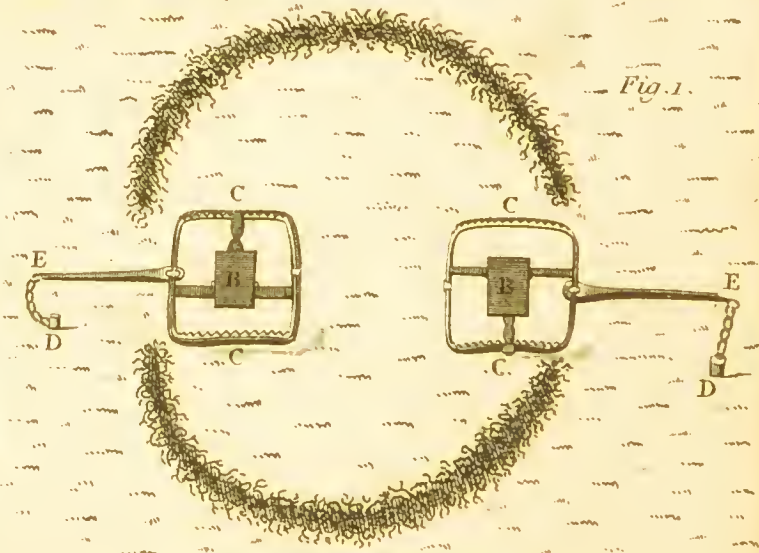
The FOX TRAP struck

Fig. 2.



The CUBE for WINGED VERMIN.

Fig. 1.



V. Woodthorpe sc. 29 Fetter Lane

THE RAVEN.

This is the largest bird that feeds on carrion, and is of a fine shining colour; in some places it is very serviceable, in eating up the stinking flesh or carcases of dead beasts and other carrion, but in many other places very mischievous, and does a great deal of harm. I having been allowed as much per head for killing them as I had for kites and hawks, as they are equally pernicious in killing and devouring young rabbits, ducklings and chickens.

I know of no better way to catch them, when they become troublesome, than to set two traps for them, in the same manner as you do for the buzzard, [see plate VI. fig. 1.] and put a rat between them for a bait, but when you have taken one or two, you must move your traps to another place, or the

others will prove too shy to be caught; for as soon as one is taken, great numbers will keep round him, and seeing him fast, will grow suspicious of some danger, and not come near the place any more; but by observing the above method, in moving the traps, I have caught great numbers of them in a day, though it is attended with some labour and trouble.

I have often caught the London Ravens near twenty miles from home, in warrens, where they will sometimes come after the young Rabbits; by the London Ravens I mean those that generally frequent the outskirts of the metropolis, and live upon the filth lying there, grubbing up the dirt in order to get at their food, from whence the tops of their wings become of a nasty, dusky brown colour, occasioned by their wallowing in the dirt, by which means they are easily distinguishable from the country Ravens, which are as black as jet, according to the old saying, *As black as a Raven.*

I have seen some of these Ravens sit upon a lamb, that has been dropped weak, not being able to run, when they have got to its head and picked out the creature's eyes while yet alive. Another remark I shall make, which is to point out the difference between the manner of birds of the hawk kind carrying their prey, and those of the carrion kind. Now it is observable that buzzards, kites, hawks, and owls, constantly carry their prey in their claws, whereas Ravens, Carrion-crows, and Magpies, carry their food in their beaks.

THE

CARRION CROW.

This bird is well known, and in country places will do prodigious mischief, by destroying young rabbits, chickens and ducks, and likewise in sucking eggs, which the hens and ducks lay in the back yards or in the hedges: these the Crows will break and eat as greedily as any other vermin whatever. Now if you find they have any haunts about your house, get a steel trap, of the same kind as you use for other winged vermin; set it in the ground, quite level with the surface, and cover it with moss; then take a little piece of bush, or some fern, stick some of it down, by one jaw quite low, and bring it round to the other jaw, [see plate VI. fig. 1.] put the bait, whether it be an egg, or rat, a piece of rabbit, or the guts of the same, or any thing else of this

sort, in the back part, on the tail of the trap; and when you have put the little fence, before described, all round, as a guide for him, he must of necessity go over the trap for the bait, and be caught; but I have been plagued with these as much as I have been with the Ravens, by being obliged to move the trap after every Crow I had taken; but by observing when one is caught, which you may easily hear, for they then make a great noise and keep flying round their imprisoned brother, almost close to the ground, you may then probably get a shoot, and kill some of them; but sometimes I have known them so shy that I could not get them to the trap at any rate. In this case you must observe the places where they most frequent, and take a cat, or a ferret, and tie it to a stake; then take a gun, and hide yourself, when the first Crow that sees the cat or ferret will make a terrible screaming noise, and bring many more, who scream and hover about till you have a fair shoot. In this manner I have had, sometimes, three or four shoots before they dispersed, and killed seve-

ral of them; for when they see any kind of animal they are not used to, in the day-time, it greatly attracts their attention, and they wonder at it, as the small birds do at the sight of an owl by day-light; and this is the best way to get at the shy ones. I have seen the crows pick out the eyes of a weak lamb, while alive, in the same manner as the ravens will.

THE MAGPIE.

This is a very mischievous bird, doing great damage in warrens, and much of the same nature as the crow, preying on all kinds of flesh and carrion, like that animal. They are extremely pernicious about farm-yards and houses, killing and devouring young ducks and chickens, and likewise in sucking and destroying eggs in great numbers, about farm-houses, where the hens lay them by the sides of the rick-yards and under the hedges. When you find they become troublesome in the above instances, set your trap (where you observe them to come) in the same manner as you do for the crow; bait it with a rat, which is as good a bait as any, or with an egg; or if they have killed any young ducks or chickens, and have not devoured them, at that place, where you find them,

set your trap, and bait it with the dead duckling or chicken, and you need not fear catching them: but be careful to observe the following rule, which is, as soon as one of the Magpies is trapped, to take it out as soon as possible, in order to set your trap again. You may easily discover this event, for as soon as one is taken in the trap, it makes a screaming noise, which brings great numbers of these vermin together, who come hovering and flying over their captive brother, which will give you a fair opportunity of shooting among them and destroying many. This method I have often put into execution, and it has been attended with very good success.

THE END.

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